

# Young Spartacus

NUMBER 73

25 CENTS

X-523

MAY 1979

## Near Eastern Communist Woman on Tour for SYL

# No to the Veil!

### Fatima Khalil Will Not Be Silenced!

There are lots of people who get very upset because we have told the truth on Iran. Howls of protest went up when the international Spartacist tendency said that the victory of Khomeini and his mullahs over the bloody shah would be no victory for the Iranian working people. Everyone from the Iranian Muslim students to the Maoists to supposed Trotskyists was driven into a frenzy by our slogan "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!" It was singled out in January by Khomeini's right-hand man, Ibrahim Yazdi, in a British radio interview as the real communist slogan. Yazdi wasn't kidding when he said "even for the overthrow of the shah we will not cooperate with the Communists"—today he commands the squads of clerical reactionaries who attack left-wing meetings in Teheran.

"Long Live Khomeini," the Muslim fanatics chant as they bomb and strafe Iran's embattled national minorities. "Long Live Khomeini" rings throughout the streets of Teheran as Islamic marshals arrest and imprison the left-wing Fedayee guerrillas. "Long Live Khomeini" accompanies the rocks, gun blasts and knife assaults on women demonstrators demanding their rights. And throughout the last year "Long Live Khomeini" has been the chant as mullah lovers in the U.S. have pounded on the doors of our forums, screamed at our speakers and spit, clawed and charged at our comrades. But these people forgot one thing—the mullahs don't hold state power in America.

What the left opportunists don't want to hear and what the Muslim fanatics want to suppress is what we said from the very start: Khomeini's reign means a return to the social mores of the 7th century, the continued vicious repression of women and the same Persian chauvinism that oppresses Iran's national minorities no less than under the shah. Five times in the last six months the Organization of Iranian Muslim Students (OIMS) and their Maoist semi-dupes in the various wings of the Iranian Student Association have tried to break up meetings sponsored by the Spartacist



Workers Vanguard

#### Trade unionists prevent mullah lovers from disrupting Ann Arbor forum.

League/Spartacus Youth League (twice in Chicago, and in Madison, East Lansing and Ann Arbor). The idiot OIMS has even turned to the cops—the American friends of the shah's murderous SAVAK—in their frenzied efforts to stop the SL/SYL.

But not only have we not been intimidated by these Islamic thugs attempting to imitate their brethren in Teheran, but we have effectively defended our forums, quickly removed disrupters and utterly defeated a cowardly attempt to drive us off the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) campus. In the last months we have in fact redoubled our efforts to bring a revolutionary program for Iran to as wide an audience as possible.

#### Mullah Thugs Put in Their Place

In March when Islamic marshals were firing upon women marching in the streets of Teheran, the SYL sponsored a tour entitled "No to the Veil!" by D.L. Reissner, editor of the unique Marxist journal on the woman question, *Women and Revolution*. Currently the SL/SYL is conducting a tour by a Near Eastern communist woman of Muslim origin, Fatima Khalil. Drawing on her experiences as a student activist and

trade-unionist organizer, Fatima Khalil's forums in cities across the country have been getting the message out: only workers revolution can defeat Islamic reaction.

It has been at Ann Arbor that the biggest confrontations have taken place, and true to form the April 5 forum by D.L. Reissner saw the Muslim fanatics at it again. Some 60 to 70 OIMS students showed up and immediately tried to block the hallway, preventing others from entering. They refused to be frisked for weapons and then called the campus cops. Once the police had left they threatened to push their way into the meeting room, but order was maintained by a defense guard of several dozen trade unionists and SL/SYL supporters.

As soon as Reissner began her talk one Koran-waving thug began heckling—and was escorted out. Thirty other hoodlums then approached the speaker's podium, but the defense marshals subdued this lot and tossed them out. The 40 remaining mullah lovers decided to be well behaved until one of them could no longer bear to listen to our defense of women's rights. He began to abuse the speaker with taunts of "CIA

*continued on page 10*

"In Islamic society women are not considered human beings. I remember when I was young and went to class to study the Koran. I was told that if I did not cover my head, I would go to hell and every strand of my hair would turn into long snakes....

"When somebody knocked on our door my mother would not go and answer it. She would first run around and try to find something to cover her head because women cannot show their faces to a strange man. The

Koran says if you show your finger to a strange man, you have to cut it off. Because it doesn't belong to your husband any more, therefore it doesn't belong to you.

"It is no accident that when Khomeini first took power he immediately outlawed abortion and imposed the *chador*. What he is trying to do is control the masses under the 'Islamic spirit.' The veil is a symbol of women's oppression under Islam and an instrument of that control."

## The Fight to Consolidate the Santa Cruz Organizing Committee

# SYL Wins Young Chicano Militants

Santa Cruz, California: rolling hills, the glorious Pacific, sun-drenched beaches—and the unlikely scene of the Spartacus Youth League's most significant expansion since the fusion with the Buffalo Marxist Caucus in 1972. From the sheltered enclave of the University of California (UCSC) the SYL has won to Trotskyism former leaders of the UCSC MEChA chapter, and organizers of mass sit-ins for divestment and of anti-Bakke demonstrations. The recent SYL National Conference enthusiastically welcomed these new comrades, most of whom are Chicanos.

The recruitment and consolidation of these comrades wasn't easy. It took a series of hard political battles to win them to the SYL and then a fight within the organization itself to separate out those who were in fact committed to proletarian revolution from those who were primarily interested in pursuing a petty-bourgeois career.

The story begins in the fall of 1977 when a group of young Chicanos split from MEChA, disgusted with its right-wing, nationalistic policies that pit Chicano, black and Asian students against each other in competition for shrinking university services. On some basic level these comrades had come to understand that the road forward for Chicanos was through a racially integrated, working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation.

During the great miners strike of 1978 which electrified the U.S. working class, these comrades organized a number of picket lines at the gates of UCSC demanding "Victory to the Miners Strike!" and "Smash Taft-Hartley!" The comrades called up the Spartacist League/SYL for help in preparing a leaflet—they had been inspired by our bold, hard-hitting approach to the strike.

In the spring and summer the SYL initiated continuing discussions with these comrades, centered on our interventions into an informal, politically amorphous study group consisting of 20 students interested in setting up a "non-sectarian communist youth group." The comrades soon discovered that even the parochial world of Santa Cruz was not devoid of political struggle: the study session turned into a series of debates between the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the SYL.

Polemics within the left—which in these relatively quiet times can often seem abstract and irrelevant to people just coming to revolutionary politics—came alive and concrete for the com-

rades. Serious members of the group quickly found that it was necessary to *take a side* in the debates; and the overwhelming majority did—with the SYL.

### SWP Walks Out on Chicano Youth

The first issue that led to a heated series of discussions was the role of militants in the United Mine Workers (UMW) strike. The ex-MEChA comrades and their friends already knew from the pages of the SL's *Workers Vanguard* the treacherous role of UMW president Arnold Miller. They were outraged at the SWP's attempts to pawn off uncritical support to Miller as the only "realistic" course. The study group knew that "realism" lay with the thousands of miners who demanded Miller's recall and twice rejected his sellout contracts.

Unable to peddle its line on the most tumultuous labor battle since the 1930s the SWP tried another angle to convince the group that "Our party is your party." Looking at the many Chicano and black students present the SWP thought they could surely win hands down on the question of nationalism and the fight against racial discrimination. After all, the SWP supports La Raza Unida party and black nationalism, while the SYL opposes both and fights instead for a *working-class* struggle against special oppression. The poor SWPers—they went into shock when the comrades said they were sick and tired of the penny-ante, back-stabbing hustlerism and hollow "Viva La Raza" rhetoric of groups like MEChA. They wanted a real strategy to win liberation for the oppressed, not the SWP's kowtowing to petty-bourgeois movements.

In the ensuing sessions comrades blasted away at the reformist SWP's popular-frontist anti-Vietnam-war work, its call for the blood-soaked U.S. army to "defend" busing in Boston, its capitulation to feminism and its de facto refusal to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. No doubt convinced that they were victim to a heinous crime against nature, the SWPers gave up and walked out, turning their backs on these students without so much as leaving a phone number behind! The SWP hasn't been seen since on the UCSC campus.

### The Split in Lotus Land

Utilizing the momentum developed in the study group the SYL opened the doors of membership to all the comrades who wanted to join. More than half of the group did—and the Santa Cruz Organizing Committee (OC) was formed. With a group of new and generally untested members it was clear that there would eventually be a differentiation among the new comrades and that a series of fights *within* the organization would be necessary to develop and consolidate them. And that is exactly what happened.

Several of the new male recruits were serious pre-professional students with a small but real stake invested in the pursuit of a petty-bourgeois career. The SYL does not necessarily counterpose becoming a doctor or a lawyer to being a revolutionist. The key question is which comes first—the party or one's career.

The choice was posed sooner than expected by the activities of a prominent radical dilettante UCSC professor, Roberto Crespi, a Puerto Rican who

had "made it." Several times in the past Crespi has flirted with various left organizations, and he in fact introduced the SYL to the summer study class which he moderated. But the professor once again got cold feet, and quickly backed away from the SL/SYL to pursue his comfortable career without hindrance from the responsibilities of serious political affiliation.

One does not have to be a member of the vanguard party to make a useful contribution to the revolutionary movement. We are not ultimatic that all those sympathetic to our politics must join. But rather than simply backing away from membership in an honest way and seeking to be a good sympathizer, Crespi increasingly sought to justify his retreat with a series of gripes and complaints. As an old friend and model to many of the comrades he consciously played on their career aspirations in order to pull them out of the SYL. Early on one of the comrades who carried real authority from the split in MEChA became Crespi's willing agent. The two of them attempted to create an anti-party, parochial, "them versus us" attitude among the new comrades.

Resisting almost every attempt to help him build a collaborative relationship with more senior comrades, Crespi's "little Lenin" (as the professor called him) cowardly played upon the less experienced comrades' honest questions to wage subterranean warfare against the OC's leadership. Attempting to prove his abilities as a "star," this "leader" grossly violated the norms of democratic centralism. For example he attempted to organize activities without consultation and he boycotted certain SYL meetings. While MEChA may operate in this manner the SYL, as a training ground for professional revolutionaries, operates according to the principles of a Leninist combat party.

Such personalist and cliquist maneuvers had a political expression, although not well-rounded or definitively expressed. The tendency of such freelancing, academic radicalism in this case was a softness toward petty-bourgeois nationalism and the labor bureaucracy.

Reflecting the male chauvinism so endemic to both the Chicano and academic milieu Crespi's lieutenant and his buddies soon became known not so humorously as the "macho caucus." Crespi himself had previously downgraded the abilities of the ex-MEChA women comrades and had attempted to convince the SYL that our eager efforts to recruit them were pointless. His right-hand man maintained a very strict priority—he came first, the males second and the women last.

It is highly significant that most of the women comrades were not in pre-professional programs. The SL/SYL has long had a policy for women

comrades aimed at overcoming the effects of special oppression in bourgeois society which tend to make them more politically passive and less sure of themselves than men. We are proud that there is relative sexual parity in our leading bodies. The ex-MEChA women comrades recognized that they had a real future in the SYL and could develop as revolutionaries. When the OC split the women tended to stand with the party as opposed to the careerist-oriented men who could more easily build a comfortable petty-bourgeois life.

Crespi's escalating hostility to the SL led him so far as to abuse a young black comrade. The "macho caucus" members still appeared to retain their personal loyalty to Crespi despite the fact that he was rapidly moving away politically. The OC was facing a de facto split—but on cliquist, not programmatic terms.

In order to correct the deteriorating situation and to lay the basis for a *political* fight that could educate the new comrades, a motion was introduced into an OC meeting: "By his own declaration professor Crespi has become politically and organizationally hostile to the party and his deeds verify his declaration." The motion posed the issue clearly: the comrades had to choose between the program of the SYL and cliquist collaboration with the dilettante professor. Still refusing to openly express any political differences several "macho caucus" members resigned at the meeting or shortly thereafter.

The split rid the new and young OC of a layer of dilettantist, careerist types. In subsequent months the OC has consolidated and aggressively championed revolutionary Marxism in a town known as a watering-hole for California's hip, affluent, back-to-nature crowd.

The SYL has been the only campus organization to rally support for the United Farmworkers strike, and our forums featuring an eyewitness account of the rank-and-file's militant battles against cops and scabs have been well attended. Our forums in defense of Iranian women against Khomeini and the mullahs have also drawn considerable interest.

The impact of the SYL's recruitment has been underlined by the actions of our opponents. The right-wing social-democratic New American Movement has tried to exclude our comrades from its public classes while the Communist Party has threatened to physically attack Chicana SYLers if they attempt to speak at public CP meetings. But the young comrades of the Santa Cruz OC have stood firm and are today a powerful confirmation of the SL/SYL's ability to recruit, educate and train a new generation of revolutionary militants. ■

## Young Spartacus

*Young Spartacus* is the newspaper of the Spartacus Youth League. The Spartacus Youth League, youth section of the Spartacist League, is a socialist youth organization which intervenes in social struggles armed with a working-class program, based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

Editorial Board: Oliver Stephens (editor), Bonnie Brodie, Mary Jo McAllister, Marc Rogier, Michael Weinstein

Production manager: Helen Kirkpatrick  
Circulation manager: Gloria Neal

Nine issues yearly; published monthly except December/January and June/July/August, by the Spartacus Youth Publishing Co., 260 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013. Telephone: 925-4295 (Editorial), 925-5665 (Business). Address all correspondence to Box 825, Canal Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10013. Domestic subscriptions: \$2.00 per year. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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

Number 73

May 1979

## Young Spartacus

NEWSPAPER OF THE SPARTACUS YOUTH LEAGUE

One Year (nine issues): \$2

New Subscription  
 Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

YSp73

Make checks payable/mail to:  
Spartacus Youth Publishing Co., Box 825, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013

# SYL Launches Recruitment Drive

"We go forward" was the theme of the Sixth National Conference of the Spartacus Youth League held last month in Chicago. The 160 delegates and observers from the SYL and Spartacist League reaffirmed the SYL's vital role as the recruiting and training ground for the future cadres of American bolshevism.

The Conference kicked off an aggressive drive to win new recruits to Trotskyism. The weekend's activities featured an opening educational by SL national chairman James Robertson and a fusion with the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the former Debs Caucus of the Socialist Party (see "How SP's Debs Caucus Was Won to Trotskyism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 225, 16 February).

The main political report by SYL national secretary Mary Jo McAllister focused on the history of Spartacist youth organizations and the recent "fight" against a thin layer of petty-bourgeois dilettantes (dubbed the "clones") within the youth organization and its leadership. Following the youth Conference a Midwest-centered SL trade-union conference and a financial commission were also held.

The SYL Conference opened with greetings from Canadian, German, French and British comrades, who noted that the SYL's experience in campus fraction work and exemplary agitational campaigns is a valuable resource of our international tendency.

## "We Are in a Position to Grow"

While most of our political opponents—hollowly proclaiming an ever-deepening radicalization—experience convulsions or demoralized stagnation, the SL/SYL is registering modest growth. Yet we have soberly assessed the present period as one of relative class quiescence and rightward drift on the campuses since the more socially turbulent years of the antiwar and New Left movements. We can now project rapid growth for our organization; our optimism is based not on successes for the international working class, but rather on driving home the lessons of defeats—Stalinism's fratricidal wars in Asia, which strike another blow at the need for proletarian solidarity against imperialism, and the rise to power of Islamic reaction in Iran, forestalling the prospect that from the all-sided popular discontent which swept away the bloody shah an independent mobilization of



Main session, SYL Sixth National Conference.

the working masses toward proletarian power would emerge. Comrade Robertson's presentation set the recent history of the youth organization in the context of these developments which sharply highlight the distinctiveness and power of our Trotskyist program (see article this issue).

Ten years ago the SL warned of the danger of a U.S./China alliance against the USSR. That alliance, toasted by Nixon/Mao in Peking in 1972, was sealed in blood this winter with the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. The SL/SYL responded with a campaign demanding "China: Don't Be a Cat's Paw of U.S. Imperialism! Soviet Union: Honor Your Treaty!" In demonstrations and in our press we posed political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies whose nationalist conflicts embolden American imperialism's "human rights" rearmament drive against the USSR. Virtually alone on the left, we stood angularly for the defense of the deformed workers states against our "own" bourgeoisie.

The Spartacist slogan "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!" scandalized our opponents who prostrated themselves to the Muslim opposition in Iran, bowing so low to Khomeini that they touted the veil—symbol of women as chattel—as a "symbol of resistance." Our proletarian opposition to clerical reaction gives us, said comrade Robertson, "the all-purpose united front." Women, national minorities, trade unionists, even any self-respecting bourgeois

democrat—under the mullah's rule "everyone's ox is gored." The secular U.S. working class is certainly unimpressed with an Iranian regime which flogs unmarried couples and alcohol drinkers and recognizes less separation between church and state than existed under the Spanish Inquisition. While the fake-"lefts" who tail everything that moves are brushing up on Koranic law, the SL/SYL is sponsoring a widely successful public tour by Fatima Khalil, a communist woman of Muslim origin on "No to the Veil!—For Workers Revolution to Defeat Islamic Reaction!" (see front page article).

The power of our program is illustrated by the recruitment of young comrades from the Chicano and divestment milieus at Santa Cruz (see article this issue) and the fusion with the comrades of the ex-Debs Caucus of the Socialist Party/USA. Both these groupings consciously rejected the nationalist, social-democratic Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in consolidating around the SL/SYL. Meanwhile the American Maoists have disintegrated (the *Guardian*, the RWH of Mickey Jarvis), gone mad (Bob Avakian's RCP) or rushed headlong into the arms of U.S. imperialism (Mike Klonsky's CPML). The SL/SYL emerges with increasing attractiveness as the alternative to SWP reformism and Maoist bankruptcy; our task is to translate this political capital into new recruits to Trotskyism.

## The "Cloned Youth"

The Conference resolution (excerpted in this issue) represents a contribution to party history in much the same vein as the SL's *Marxist Bulletin* series which chronicled the formative fights of our precursor, the Revolutionary Tendency, within the SWP. But unlike this struggle or the faction fights which have shaped the SL, the fight against the "cloned youth" was one-sided, waged by the organization against an erosion within the youth organization of the values and worldview of a revolutionary proletarian party. Confronted with Trotsky's classic prescription for such a petty-bourgeois layer—"into the factories!" to dilute their egotism with social experience—the "clones" did not fight, most of them quit.

Centered largely around the youth press, the "clones" had begun to cultivate a sterile, literary conception of politics as elegant point-scoring divorced from the struggle for power. The petty-bourgeois values of this layer, reflecting the "mental vs. manual" arrogance and male chauvinism of the academic milieu exerted a disproportionate influence on the youth organization as the SL's policy of industrialization—begun systematically in 1971—tended to deprive many of our most promising youth recruits of a

chance to play active, leading roles in the youth organization. Alienated from the party leadership and increasingly hostile to Leninist norms of functioning, the "clones" sought to establish a stratification between "theoretician" and "apparatchik"—particularly insidiously between male and female. Left unchecked, they could have eroded the organization's long-standing commitment to "affirmative action"—that is, if the revolutionary party is not to replicate within itself bourgeois society's suppression of the potential of women, the development of women cadres cannot be left to chance.

For many of the newer comrades, the "cloned youth" fight was their first serious experience of internal political struggle. Comrade Robertson's keynote presentation set the fight in historical perspective as utterly trivial compared with the "hard fights that lie ahead." When asked "Do you want to die or go to work?" the "clones" chose political death; most simply resigned, and while a few of the quitters spit on the floor on the way out, most acknowledged their long-standing ambivalence over petty-bourgeois career aspirations vs. the life of a professional revolutionist.

The discussion on the main political report strikingly underlined the emphasis on the woman question. When the hands shot up for the speakers' list, 14 of the first 20 speakers on the round were women comrades.

The Boston SYL organizer explained: "The 'clones' had a hothouse conception of developing youth leaders. They did not understand that you have to earn authority—it's not something that's given to you by birthright.... What the fight brought out was the importance of experience in shaping cadre.... The 'clones' wanted to run a vertical cult operation but as Leninists we understand that you have to draw on the various strengths of all the comrades."

Several speakers stressed the importance of the woman question in Iran and the need to aggressively expose the capitulation of the U.S. left: "we should go on a *jihad* against these creeps," said one comrade. The publicity which the Fatima Khalil tour has already received in the bourgeois and campus press is an index of the impact our principled line on Iran can have in this country.

The Conference concluded with the election of a new National Committee. Demonstrating the maturing of the SYL the nominees for National Committee were youth leaders who have real influence in the party councils of their locals and nationally. Three SYL representatives to the party Central Committee were also elected. Such an SYL component in the party leadership is critical to Leninist youth/party relations, codified in the formula "organizational independence and

*continued on page 11*

## RMT/SYL Fuse

The following motion was adopted unanimously by separate caucuses of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency and the Spartacus Youth League during the SYL's National Conference.

The Socialist Party's (SP) preaching of the need for "unity of all socialists" originally attracted the comrades who went on to form the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (RMT). But the comrades discovered that the SP's "unity" is not with "socialists," but in fact turned out to be with the bourgeois state. After the Trotskyist entry the American SP was rendered essentially an empty shell—after World War II it came to function as the arm of the U.S. State Department.

After breaking from the SP, the RMT was courted by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The comrades found that these ostensible Trotskyists represented nothing oth-

er than a trendier version of social democracy. The SWP's Kautskyian concept of the party of the whole class, their tender embrace of the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus who reject defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialism, and their single issue campaigns designed expressly to gain support from the liberal bourgeoisie all mark the SWP as a reformist organization that stands as a political obstacle to the building of a revolutionary party.

It is a reaffirmation of the Leninist tactic of regroupment that even in the hidebound, encrusted SP which has nakedly collaborated with the bourgeoisie for over 60 years, subjective revolutionaries can be won over to Trotskyism.

Therefore it is resolved to go forward with the fusion of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency and the Spartacus Youth League.

# Iran, China/Vietnam: SL Program Stands Out

## "Let's Go Out and Recruit a Couple Hundred More Members!"

At an introductory session preceding the Spartacus Youth League National Conference, Spartacist League national chairman James Robertson posed the possibility for a qualitative expansion of the SL/SYL on the basis of the historical verification of key elements of our distinctive political line by the current events in Iran and the China/Vietnam war. Speaking before about one third of the forces of revolutionary Trotskyism in North America, comrade Robertson retraced in broad outlines the history of our tendency and the developments which underlay the present opportunity for an "historically controlled breakthrough."

The Spartacist League's organizational predecessor was the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) formed within the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in opposition to the leadership's uncritical adaptation to the Castro leadership of the Cuban revolution and to black nationalism. The differing appetites of the RT's original founders (Wohlforth, who longed to serve as the tool of Gerry Healy and his British SLL; Mage, the fellow-traveler of the French OCI; and Robertson, who barked back to the Cannonism of the earlier, still-revolutionary SWP) became apparent after Healy's autocratic maneuvers forced a split in the RT in November 1962, and Wohlforth set up the expulsion of the tendency majority from the

then-centrist SWP. Prematurely and unwillingly ejected, the Spartacist group actively sought readmission until the SWP "locked on as a servant of the American bourgeoisie" in late 1965, openly collaborating in the antiwar movement with the defeatist wing of the U.S. ruling class.

"We acquired everybody who didn't like the SWP and couldn't figure out where else to go, and some of them were pretty funny.... The only comparison I can make is the problem that Trotsky ran into in '27 when he got expelled, exiled and tossed out of Russia. Everybody who didn't like Stalin said they were Trotskyites." On the basis of a few, crucial programmatic issues—which systematically applied and extended generated our present program—the SL took shape as the living organizational expression in this country of the Leninism of the early Communist International.

With the political demoralization of one of the key RT leaders, the SL was left with "a good program and a core of determined comrades, not one of whom could write ten lines." The agonizing difficulties in producing *Spartacist* were characteristic of the hard choices posed by the lack of organizational forces: "Facing Gerry Healy at the London conference in '66 was easy—all he could have done was have me taken out to the back alley and beaten. But what do you do when all your comrades want to

know, 'Where's *Spartacist*?' And you know that if you give them *Spartacist* you destroy the organization.... We did not have the capacity. And meanwhile all our opponents were saying, 'The Spartacists are these petty-bourgeois literary gentlemen.' It was poignant."

Reviewing the SL's first decade, comrade Robertson traced the process of crystallization and clarification

marked the present demise of the black movement as an organized, militant force in this country. The current know-nothing student generation is preoccupied with cultism, eco-faddism and self-indulgence (although reimposition of the draft could rapidly evoke some idealistic indignation).

The weight of U.S. imperialism in the world has continued to decline since the

**"You cannot become a cadre until you have a sense that yesterday is different from today and will be different from tomorrow."**

which screened out those who had only a partial and conjunctural overlapping with the program. As in the 1903 split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, implications of a fight often become clear only after the subsequent unfolding of historical experience. And while our underlying programmatic basis never deviated, its expression in practice—lacking the benefit of hindsight—often took less than coherent forms.

Despite errors and weaknesses the SL grew three-fold. But by 1968, amid campus rebellions and ghetto explosions, the organization was stagnant, unable to capitalize on the massive social unrest. The Turner-Ellens opposition—eager to plunge into frenzied activism among blacks and workers, and reflecting at bottom the urge to wish away limitations imposed by a real lack of forces—succeeded in paralyzing the SL externally for most of a year while the internal faction fight was waged.

The wave of recruitment, regroupment and industrialization which began in 1971 evoked the symmetrically opposite impulse, embodied in the Cunningham/Moore layer, who clung to the comforts of a literary, study-circle existence and resisted efforts to move beyond a "submarginal, subexistent, subpropaganda group."

The SL's work in the antiwar movement, despite the potential power of our unique central agitational thrust for political labor strikes against the war, bore little visible fruit until after it was over: we lacked the social weight to implement our line in even an exemplary fashion. "I literally myself saw thousands and thousands of young militants give a communist clenched fist when we said, 'All Indochina Must Go Communist!' It caught the moment. But we didn't catch the members."

The last major boost in growth came with the regroupment in 1971-73 with a series of workerist/feminist and Maoist collectives, and was closely associated with the 1970 national postal strike which successfully challenged the old taboo on strikes against the government, and ushered in a period of pervasive workerism on the left.

"But then nothing much happened. We always make the same analysis: end of Vietnam war plus Watergate, massive cynicism, massive contempt. Furthermore, the dollar has crashed. All sections of society are estranged. There ought to be the basis in this country for revolutionary action. But this is now 1979. Not very much happened."

The trade unions have been eroded as bastions of bureaucratism, but not broken. The destruction of the Panthers

1971 devaluation of the dollar, and the resulting inflation grinds down, not only on the American workers, but on our party as well. Only the government, with its progressive income tax, gets an ever-bigger slice of real wages.

### The No-Nuke Syndrome

The speaker commented on the wave of petty-bourgeois ecological moralizing and its class hypocrisy: "You have oil spills in San Francisco harbor while you're bringing in the oil to run the fossil fuel electrical plants. So they get as many students as they got dying seagulls and they go out and kind of wipe them off. And they drive there, you understand? They drive there."

"So they tell us we can't have fossil fuel; we can't have nuclear plants—which should not be built upwind of populated centers, and should not be in the hands of the maniacs that run them; and there's not enough hydroelectric; and solar energy is not well-developed. So therefore, if you examine it concretely and practically, the proposal is to turn off electric power in America. New York has now twice experienced ecological liberation: they're called blackouts."

The ecology movement protests the nuclear plants, but not the coal mining disasters, and not the hydrogen bombs; they rail against the Concorde, but are silent on the hundreds of military supersonic aircraft. Behind the moralism stands the proposition that the workers on the tankers and in the mines, the people who live next to the mines and mills, *they can die*—but not the suburban housewives. As long as the social cost is restricted to the working class, it's acceptable.

The petty-bourgeois ecology movement is not a deformed example of social protest, but a moralistic reaction, aimed against the proletariat and implicitly against civilization. They confuse the capitalist mode of organization with the development of technology. But we live, and must live, in an industrial society—unless one is prepared to follow the example of Genghis Khan, who built mountains of human skulls, not out of cruelty but to reduce the lands he conquered to a pastoral, grazing economy, the only economy he could understand. Unfortunately our ecologists are too soft-minded to propose this.

On all questions of technology, capitalism reveals its irrationality. But socialism of itself will not solve all such questions—it will only make it possible to try to do it better.

Another crucial step forward for our tendency since 1972, the speaker empha-



1965: When U.S. started bombing North Vietnam Spartacist demanded USSR give real aid.

1979: SL/SYL protests Chinese invasion of Vietnam.



Workers Vanguard

sized, was breaking out of North America, with the development of real if weak sections in Europe. Historically the alignments in the ostensibly Trotskyist world movement have reflected profound divisions along ethnic/language lines: the International Committee centrally concentrated in English-speaking sections and the Pabloists based in continental Europe and its ex-colonial possessions. It is critical for our tendency to overcome these historic divisions. Active participation in the international movement by the North Americans, and the black comrades in particular, will tend both to fertilize the work of the international and to provide the necessary corrective to any continental insularity on the part of comrades here. The vanguard of the American proletariat must not replicate the false conceit of the U.S. bourgeoisie, which lay behind its defeat in Vietnam.

The radical milieu in this country has been shaken by the China/Vietnam border war, as witnessed by the sudden interest in our positions on the part of ex-members and sympathetic parents. "And we can see it in the young workers, who think they might have to fight the resulting war. There we look like people who have the answers. See, during the Vietnam war we had a slogan that said: 'Soviet Nuclear Shield Must Cover Hanoi!' Now that was certainly unique and striking enough, it just didn't grab anybody in this country. But what we have to say now is also *sensible*. It *explains* things. And it's historically founded." Everyone else was surprised by the U.S./China alliance: we predicted it ten years ago, we predicted it last year, and we're the only ones who can explain it now.

**No to the Veil!**

Comrade Robertson underscored the conjunctural popular appeal of our line on Iran, which makes sense to anyone who is not a Shi'ite Muslim and who stands for the elements of democracy, or the right of trade-union organization—or anyone who's for the French Revolution of 1789: "the all-purpose united front." In particular he stressed the importance of the Bolshevik stance on the woman question and counterposed it to Kate Millet's bourgeois feminism: "One of the main motor forces of proletarian revolution in the East is the woman question. The woman question is not 'He doesn't understand me, he won't pay my shrink's fee, he won't do the dishes, he wonders why I don't come all the time.' It's life or death, the right to kill a woman, a woman is not a human

In his concluding remarks comrade Robertson cautioned the comrades to keep in mind the problems of scale: the anticipated expansion will not make the SI into a mass party in this period; our tasks and capabilities will remain at an essentially propagandistic level. Precisely because we are a propaganda group, the vindication of our line on Iran and the Sino-Soviet split should make us very attractive to young radicals.

Successful prediction of historic defeats for the working class does not necessarily strengthen the revolutionary vanguard. As Trotsky noted in the wake of the bloody 1927 defeat of the Chinese proletariat:

"Our comrades expressed optimism because our analysis was so clear that everyone would see it and we would be sure to win the party. I answered that the strangulation of the Chinese revolution is a thousand times more important for the masses than our predictions. Our predictions can win some few intellectuals who take an interest in such things, but not the masses."

But in contrast to the Russian party and Communist International of the 1920s, we are not a mass party. At present we want the thousand or so radicals who are deeply interested in Iran and Indochina.

**"Enough! We Want Ours."**

The critical task of building authoritative communist fractions in the trade unions was sharply underscored: "It's very easy to talk about proletarian uprising and qualitative upsurge in class militancy in America. But this country lacks the sophisticated infrastructure of the defeat of a series of revolutions.... We have a trade-union bureaucracy of dinosaurs. The SWP waits distantly in the wings. Lord only knows what a proletarian upsurge would look like in this country. Because the sophisticated mechanisms of reformists and revisionists are not in place. We always talk about an American 1905, and rightly so. We had better have fractions or the working class will lose because they will be headless, infinitely militant but non- and misdirected. Very, very powerful, very violent, very turbulent—but with very little idea of what they are fighting against and for, except 'Enough! We want ours,' but without any social sense and without the very suave misdirection of social democrats and Stalinists. So don't feel just pleasure at the thought of a politically unconscious working class going into a revolutionary process." Moreover, comrade Robertson pointed out, elemental working-class discontent can also be channeled into reactionary

**"The bourgeois revolution, which proclaimed that women are no longer property but human beings with a right of contract, is a most precious achievement."**

being, a woman is a piece of meat, property. In the East, in Russian Central Asia, in Iran, the Arab world, Pakistan, India and China, the woman question stood at least co-equal with the proletarian question in recruiting young cadres. And the feminists don't understand that.... So it is very important to understand what the Mensheviks know very well, that the bourgeois revolution, which proclaimed that women are no longer property but human beings with a right of contract, is a most precious achievement."

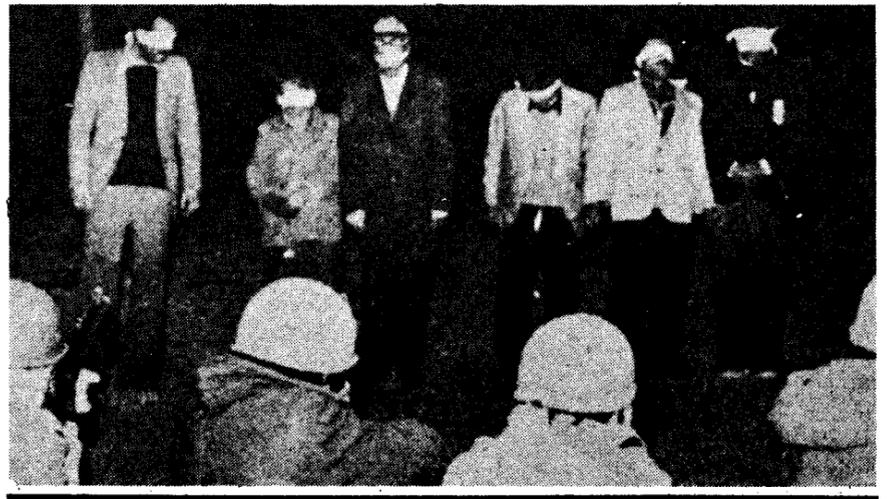
The speaker also warned of the need to distinguish between the innocent victims of the mullahs' puritanical wrath (like the "victims" of "homosexual gang rape" sentenced to flogging by the Muslim courts) and those who richly merit the firing squad: the shah's torturers, prison guards, generals and SAVAK agents. Nor should we feel at all apologetic for our vigorous physical defense of our forums against the disruptions by Khomeini's supporters in this country—they have openly boasted that they would shoot us in Teheran.

directions: "The most obvious danger, of course, is a racial civil war."

The young comrades were urged to study Trotsky's *Lessons of October* to gain a sense of the sudden shifts occasioned by historical circumstance: "There you are, a proletarian revolutionary, you're despised, you're hunted down—and suddenly, there is a certain kind of turn and you're riding the popular current." The youth, who have lived through only one or two of the duller political periods, are especially vulnerable to impressionism and its narrowing of historical vision: "You cannot become a cadre until you have a sense that yesterday is different from today and will be different from tomorrow. Otherwise you do not feel in your guts the necessity a Marxist must experience—that history changes, the world changes." There is an opening for us now in the U.S., our line looks good: the opportunity exists, if we can aggressively and systematically make use of it, to go out and recruit a few hundred more members in the course of the next year. ■



While fake-lefts hail victory of Islamic reaction in Iran, Khomeini's militias execute homosexuals.



"Generally speaking, crises arise in the party at every serious turn in the party's course, either as a prelude to the turn or as a consequence of it. The explanation for this lies in the fact that every period in the development of the party has special features of its own and calls for specific habits and methods of work. A tactical turn implies a greater or lesser break in these habits and methods. Herein lies the direct and most immediate root of internal party friction and crises. 'It happens all too frequently,' wrote Lenin in July 1917, 'that when history makes an abrupt turn, even the most advanced parties are unable for a longer or shorter period of time to adapt themselves to new conditions. They keep repeating the slogans of yesterday—slogans which were correct yesterday, but which have lost all their meaning today, becoming devoid of meaning "suddenly," with the self-same "suddenness" that history makes its abrupt turn.' (*Works*). Hence the danger arises that if the turn is too abrupt or too sudden, and if in the preceding period too many elements of inertia and conservatism have accumulated in the leading organs of the party, then the party proves itself unable to fulfill its leadership at the supreme and critical moment for which it has been preparing itself in the course of years or decades. The party is ravaged by a crisis, and the movement passes the party by—and heads towards defeat.

"A revolutionary party is subjected to the pressure of other political forces. At every given stage of its development, the party elaborates its own methods of

counteracting and resisting this pressure. During a tactical turn and the resulting internal regroupments and frictions, the party's power of resistance becomes weakened. From this the possibility always arises that the internal groupings in the party, which originate from the necessity of a turn in tactics, may develop far beyond the original controversial points of departure and serve as a support for various class tendencies. To put the case more plainly: the party which does not keep step with the historical tasks of its own class becomes, or runs the risk of becoming, the indirect tool of other classes....

"If tactical turns usually lead to internal friction in the party, how much deeper and fiercer must be the friction resulting from strategical turns! And the most abrupt of all turns is the turn of the proletarian party from the work of preparation and propaganda, of organization and agitation, to the immediate struggle for power, to an armed insurrection against the bourgeoisie. Whatever remains in the party that is irresolute, skeptical, conciliatorist, capitulatory, in short, Menshevik—all this rises to the surface in opposition to the insurrection, seeks for theoretical formulas to justify its opposition and finds them ready-made in the arsenal of the opportunist opponents of yesterday. We shall have occasion to observe this phenomenon more than once in the future."

—Leon Trotsky  
*Lessons of October*

# Forging a Youth Cadre

## The "Cloned Youth" Fight and Youth-Party Relations

**W**hile the international Spartacist tendency is undergoing a significant expansion, most notably in Britain, the past period for the SL/SYL in the U.S. has been one of relative stagnation. The common movement has not experienced qualitative growth since 1971-1972. Though the party has continued to recruit both from the SYL and elsewhere, the membership of the SYL has declined each year since 1975. The effects on the party have been evident.

The youth recruited to our movement, mainly off the campuses, have been attracted largely on the basis of abstract ideas rather than through actual social struggle and consequently are particularly vulnerable to the pressures of bourgeois society. The building occupations and street skirmishes in the days of the New Left are, for the most part, foreign and distant to our current youth membership. The realities of the class struggle no doubt seem distant to the "now" generation of the 1970s. Most of our recruits have rarely witnessed, let alone participated in, any elemental class battles. With the notable exception of the 110-day miners strike, the last time the American workers militantly defied the government and won was the 1970 postal workers wildcat.

While the campuses have been relatively quiescent since the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. has certainly not returned to a period of fanatical, 1950s-style anti-Communism with the ruling class enjoying widespread moral authority. The present generation of students on the American campuses can best be described as "resigned"—as opposed to converted—to the ideals and goals of U.S. imperialism. A recent television interview with Columbia University students concerning the possible reimposition of the draft is indicative. The sentiment of the students was nearly unanimous: "We are certainly willing to serve our country, but if there's a war, we'll go to jail."

Impressionism and impatience are the nature of youth. There is an expectation of quick results—the future seems unreal and remote. It is thus not surprising that for the youth comrades

*The following are major excerpts from the main resolution adopted unanimously by the delegates to the Sixth National Conference of the Spartacus Youth League.*

recruited in the 1970s the present stagnation seems more deep-going and permanent than it actually is. The relative lack of domestic class struggle, poor regroupment possibilities, the moral appeal of the "human rights" crusade in the academic milieu and the rightist character of the little activism that does exist on the campus (the divestment movement, anti-nuke movement and the eco-freaks) all combine to reinforce a very narrow, bloodless sense of politics.

The "cloned youth" fight was an attempt to rectify the corrosive effect of a sub-political layer on the political and organizational working relations in the SYL. There was a dislocation of values and a growing tension between the youth and the party. Many of the "clones" served on the leading bodies of the SYL. Their extremely one-sided conception of our political tasks affected the organization. Prior to the recent fight there was a disproportionate recognition given to literary and intellectual endeavors in the youth and the press, and the activities of the SYL tended to reflect a parochial and literary world view.

Left unchecked, the dangerous situation which was developing in the SYL could have led to the destruction of a whole layer of youth cadres, primarily centered in the apparatus, and an estrangement of the youth organization from the party similar to the relations between the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) (4th) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), when the youth and party became parallel and hostile organizations. Or, as indicated by the number of political wobbles always tending toward accommodation to liberal public opinion, it is not unlikely that there would have been a Shachtmanite development in the youth at some future juncture when bourgeois pressure was brought to bear.

But the disease was recognizable and called forth a certain reflex reaction on the part of the party Central Committee

(CC). In the spirit of Trotsky (who wrote worriedly to Cannon regarding the petty-bourgeois boys and girls of the YPSL), it was proposed that the "clones" be industrialized to acquaint them with the realities of the class struggle or that they be eliminated from the organization. The fight which ensued had the desired results. A number of the comrades singled out as the objects of the fight resigned rather than go into the plants while others accepted an industrial perspective.

The youth organization represents the future of the vanguard party. It is the youth that must pick up the banner and carry forward if the older cadres falter. One of the most important results of the fight has been the re-creation of collaborative relations between the central party collective and the SYL. Particularly in the absence of tested youth leaders—a chronic handicap of our youth organization historically—these ties are crucial to building a youth group which has a balanced sense of its role and purpose in the common movement. The eight-year history of the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC)/Revolutionary Communist Youth (RCY)/Spartacus Youth League (SYL) has been a struggle to forge a dynamic and vital, independent youth organization. An examination of this history facilitates an understanding of the recent "cloned youth" fight.

### The Formation of the RMC

The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus had its origins in the 1969 split from Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) when the Spartacist League critically supported Progressive Labor (PL) and their followers as the subjectively pro-working-class tendency against their major factional opponents, the Weathermen and the Revolutionary Youth Movement II. Though the handful of Spartacist supporters that attended the split convention were given a hearing, we had neither the forces nor the influence to have a real impact on the events. The SL subsequently undertook systematic intervention into PL/SDS, and the RMC was formally launched in early 1970. Pursuing a policy of revolutionary regroupment centered on PL/SDS, the RMC functioned both as a caucus within SDS and a loose Trotskyist youth group.

The RMC intervened as a left opposition in SDS fighting for an aggressive socialist policy in contrast to the narrow social-work approach of the PL-controlled leadership. Attempting to polarize PL/SDS, the RMC proposed positive programmatic content to PL's amorphous pro-working-class orientation and argued that SDS should become a non-exclusionist socialist youth organization. But PL refused to

confront the fundamental questions of Stalinism in its break from Maoism and was unable to consolidate its leftward motion and adopt a revolutionary program. When SDS plunged into sub-reformist activism around the anti-racist textbook campaign and returned to the fold of class collaborationism by joining the National Peace Action Coalition and Women's National Action Abortion Coalition, the RCY exited.

Probably the single most costly failure of the SL/U.S. was our inability to intervene in SDS early on in a large-scale and systematic way. From the time of the founding conference of the SL in 1966 to the formation of the RMC the organization was involved in little mass work of any kind. The main arena for mass work in the early days of the Spartacist tendency was the civil rights movement, but with the rise of black nationalism we were effectively frozen out of the the black movement by 1968.

Cornell, a major center of New Left radicalism, was the one place we had an indigenous campus circle in that period. The Young Socialist League (YSL) was active from 1964 to 1968 during the peak of the turmoil on the campuses. The YSL campaigned in support of civil rights and black self-defense, collecting money for the Deacons for Defense under the slogan, "Every Dime Buys a Bullet." And while the student-based antiwar movement was overwhelmingly pacifist, the YSL shocked and polarized the entire campus by collecting funds for the NLF, making concrete our call for "military victory to the NLF." The YSL also propagated among the students the extremely unpopular "We Will Go" position on the draft. Cornell was the one place where we intervened consistently and effectively into SDS and the broader antiwar movement early on, leading to the recruitment of high quality cadres, many of whom are members of our present Central Committee.

The Ellens-Turner fight (which consumed the organization for nearly an entire year in 1968) was in a sense a fight over entry into SDS. With the mass radicalization brought about by the war in Vietnam there was a general recognition in the organization that SDS was the prime arena for student/youth work. In fact as early as 1965 a comrade at Cornell argued for entry into SDS, which had just dropped its anti-communist clause. But the resources of the organization were meager, the membership heterogeneous and the organization was still in the process of codifying the essential programmatic basis of our tendency.

There was in fact internal resistance to undertaking serious student work motivated by illusions in the opportunities offered by the black movement at that time as well as by a burgeoning, ill-defined workerism which culminated in the Ellens-Turner faction fight. The fight weeded out the marginal elements in the membership and for the first time the SL had a homogeneous, developed



SL supporter seized by University of California cops in picket of Soviet attaché on the Berkeley campus, 14 November 1966.

Daily Cal

cadre capable of undertaking new tasks.

But we were too late in getting into SDS and our resources were too slim to allow us to be a real factor in the explosive faction fight of 1969. Nor was it possible for us to compete effectively with PL nationwide for the best of the left-wing elements in SDS after the split occurred. Nevertheless, as was acknowledged in the 1971 "Memorandum on the Transformation of the Spartacist League," the recruitment of many valuable comrades out of our work in SDS during this period in part provided the basis for the qualitative expansion of the Spartacist tendency, both domestically and internationally.

The RMC, even while operating as a caucus within SDS, did not limit itself to SDS' internal political struggle. The RMC was also the primary vehicle for Spartacist intervention into the antiwar movement. The SL/RMC sought to create a class polarization in the U.S. around the Vietnam War. As opposed to the peace crawls meant to pressure the doves in the Democratic Party, the attempts of the SWP/Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) to tie the antiwar movement to the liberal bourgeoisie and the impotent confrontationism of the New Left, the RMC fought for a working-class orientation—for labor political strikes against the war. During the Kent-Cambodia crisis the RMC initiated Work Stoppage Committees, raising the need to transform the student strike against the war. This campaign later served as a model for the Bay Area RCY. With the mining of Haiphong Harbor in 1972 the West Coast campuses exploded. The RCY again initiated Work Stoppage Committees and a number of our youth activists and trade-union supporters were able to gain a hearing in the unions (particularly the ILWU, CWA and AFSCME) for our proposals for class action against the war.

The launching of the RMC contrasts sharply with the founding of the YSA. The RMC was initiated by the central leadership of the SL and entrusted to comrades who had little prior experience in youth work. The leadership of the organization was simply handed to a number of junior party leaders—it was never fought for. The YSA on the other hand was the product of a fusion which brought together a number of powerful young leaders with years of experience in the socialist youth movement. The SWP had very few youth activists. The real impetus for the launching of the *Young Socialist* and eventually the founding of the YSA in 1960 was the regroupment with the



Young Spartacus

**SYL united-front campaign against CIA/NSA recruiters at UC Berkeley, 1976.**

leaders of the Shachtmanite Young Socialist League, including Mage, Wohlforth and Robertson. Yet the national leaders of the YSA faced greater difficulties than the youth leaders of the RMC.

In the first place the parent SWP politically undercut the development of a revolutionary youth group by pursuing an erroneous regroupment policy. In an attempt to overcome its isolation the SWP for a time chased elements who had broken from the Communist Party (CP) under the impact of the Soviet invasion of Hungary, like the Gatesites (who maintained an essentially liberal opposition to the Kremlin before exiting politics altogether). But rather than pursuing a Leninist regroupment policy, the SWP directed the youth to form broad centrist amalgams with the Stalinists and centrist elements. While the Trotskyists maintained control of the paper, the *Young Socialist*, the IBM clubs (Independent, Broad and Militant organizations) were looser and sought to include Trotskyists and pro-Stalinists alike. It was not until 1958 that the editorial policy of *YS* was placed on a firm programmatic basis marking a definite turn away from conciliation with the Stalinists and centrists.

Moreover the history of the Trotskyist youth in the U.S. had largely been a history of headaches for the party. Still smarting from the experience of the YPSL (4th) which left en masse with Shachtman in 1940, significant sections of the party were suspicious of and obstructive to the creation of an organizationally separate national youth formation.

The youth cadres of the YSA were accomplished political leaders in their

own right as well as veterans of numerous factional battles in a whole array of organizations. It was the youth leadership who formed the Revolutionary Tendency and took up the battle for the revolutionary perspective of Trotskyism when the party cadres of the SWP defaulted and the SWP underwent first a centrist and later a reformist degeneration.

In contrast the RMC was created on the initiative and with the encouragement of the SL leadership. The SL materially supported the RMC and gave every assistance in formulating clear Leninist politics and perspectives for a Trotskyist youth group. The particular origins of the RMC give some indication as to why there have been difficulties throughout the existence of our youth group in forging an effective leadership cadre. It remains true today that comrade Robertson is our best youth leader. The cadres that have assimilated some sense of the particularities of youth work are no longer in the youth organization. Furthermore it is difficult to forge a new youth leadership when there are few opportunities for comrades to cut their teeth in genuine social struggle.

**The Transformation of the SL: The Impact of Party Industrialization**

As the party undertook industrialization and the other tasks of the transformation, the Revolutionary Communist Youth (founded in 1971) was just becoming organizationally independent. Yet this was a period of rapid growth for the entire organization; the RCY grew four-fold in 1971-1972. With the impact of the French general strike

and the increase of working-class struggle in the U.S. in the period 1969-1971, including the volatile postal wildcat of 1970, even the former Third Worldists and student vanguardists of the American left turned their attention to the working class. The bankruptcy of the New Left was evident and a hard working-class orientation had more impact.

This is the period when we made significant gains due to our regroupment orientation. The July 1971 NPAC conference had significance in that regard. It was the first overt realization of the popular-frontist coalition that the SWP/YSA had been striving for since the days of the 5th Avenue Peace Parade Committee. The SWP succeeded in roping in senator Vance Hartke and rammed his presence at the conference down the throats of the participants with brutal force. The division of the tendencies at that conference, ranging from revolutionary through centrist to reformist, crystallized the main lines of division within the radical movement and fairly accurately indicated the possible targets for regroupment in that period.

Fusions with the ex-Maoist Communist Working Collective and the Buffalo Marxist Collective and the prior recruitment to the RMC through work in SDS gave the SL/RCY the resources to undertake a qualitative expansion of our work: reinforcement of the Central Office, regularization of a monthly press, extension of our trade-union work and the consolidation of the RCY as a Trotskyist youth league. Those recruited to the youth organization in that period were recruited largely on the basis of this transformation and greeted the industrialization perspective with great enthusiasm. The 1972 clique defection of Cunningham-Moore-Treiger, which represented a resistance to the turn in the organization, had little impact in the RCY.

If anything there was a lack of understanding of the importance of youth work for the success of the transformation. The factories were "where it was at." There was a tendency to see the party industrialization not simply as a more important priority than youth work, but as the *only* work worthy of a real revolutionist. There was a definite undercurrent of workerism in the youth organization sparked by the industrialization. The party and the youth national leadership had to reassert our intention to build a vital youth organization as a training ground for our young comrades. The youth was not simply the student fraction of the SL. This fight against youth liquidationism was a necessary corrective and a prelude to a concerted effort to establish viable campus fractions through a conscious policy of student "implantation."

While the RCY was successful in establishing campus fractions on a



**SL/SYL champions labor-black defense against racist terror in 1974/1975 Boston busing crisis.**

*continued on page 8*



intervention. In what was a major gathering of our opponents on the left we had resigned ourselves to the role of "the critics." What was obviously needed was a positive statement of what we stood for—concrete acts of international labor action to aid the fight against apartheid.

These activities involved the largest clusters of the youth national leadership on both coasts. In one case, Santa Cruz, the intervention was misled; in the other, the divestment conference, it was underled. Both incidents indicate a lack of a sense of the jugular in politics. There is no sense of stakes. It will probably require the experience of genuine social/political struggle and factional battles in the party for the comrades in the SYL to fully comprehend that the essence of politics is power.

**Rightism on Iran**

The "clone layer" exhibited a tendency to generate political wobbles always tending toward the right. There was, for instance, significant disorientation in the youth organization concerning the Iranian Student Association (ISA) and our attitude toward the religious opposition in Iran. Contacts from the ISA and groupings of ISAers that we were talking to were consistently overrated as the comrades took the leftist verbiage of these groups as good coin. There was a failure to look behind the formal rhetoric of the various wings of the ISA and examine the actual social composition of the movement.

The Iranian students sent to study in the U.S. are mostly the sons and daughters of the small bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. They are in training to become Iran's technical elite, those who will run the industries and perhaps even the government. The ISA's politics are the politics of the National Front under the gun. Despite their professed adherence to Marxism-Leninism, the commitment of these students to the interests of the proletariat is, for the most part, questionable. In our polemics against the ISA it was pointed out that Maoism is a convenient cloak for petty-bourgeois hostility to the Soviet Union which borders Iran on the north. The attachment to two-stage revolution of most of the ISAers has a logic and reflects not so much a deep adherence to Stalinist opportunism but the petty-bourgeois aspiration that the first stage of the revolution would catapult them into power. In fact that may well be the case for some as it is evident that Khomeini is populating the government ministries and posts with the liberals of the National Front. It is not surprising then that all wings of the ISA without exception attached their seal of approval to Khomeini and the mullahs.

When the banner headline "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs!" appeared in *Workers Vanguard*

there was considerable confusion and the rumblings of opposition within the SYL. The disagreements ranged from a feeling that the slogan posed an equality between the shah and the mullahs when in fact the former was in power while the latter was not, to an appetite to give military support to the religious opposition. The slogan was designed to express in the most angular terms our strategic perspective for the Iranian revolution: a life without the monarchy or the Islamic hierarchy. It was not intended to encapsulate a whole range of tactics vis-à-vis the mass movement which was led and controlled by the mullahs, but rather to warn of the dire consequences of tailing Khomeini. It was a powerful propaganda slogan meant to jar the left into the recognition that it is the task of Marxist revolutionists to find a way to raise a proletarian perspective, not to accept the subordination of the mass movement to the reactionary drive of the clerics for an Islamic republic. And as such it was obviously effective as it clearly distinguished us as the Marxist forces opposed to the theocratic reactionaries and earned the Spartacist tendency the animosity of the entire opportunist left.

The disorientation within the youth organization reflected the pressures from the Iranian student milieu. The advocacy of a military bloc or military support to the religious opposition would not have been appropriate at that juncture as it was not a question of a bloc with bourgeois nationalist forces against imperialism. Behind the discomfort with the angularity of our line was a softness on the milieu and an inclination that anything that destabilized the situation would necessarily favor the workers movement. At bottom this brings into question the role of the proletariat as the agent of social change. In Iran a proletarian perspective is not an abstraction but a powerful possibility. The failure of the proletariat to emerge as an independent factor is the responsibility of the misleadership of the reformists, especially the Tudeh party, which has repetitively beheaded the workers movement in Iran. The softness on the question of our attitude toward the religious opposition could imply a stagist conception of the revolution—first the mullahs, then us—whereas what is called for is an angular independent perspective that could crystallize out a proletarian core and pose a working-class axis to the upheaval in Iran.

**Youth-Party Relations**

As indicated previously one of the most important products of the "cloned youth" fight is the re-creation and strengthening of the ties between the youth organization and the party. For the last two years the party has in some measure lost control of the youth work and there has been an increasing estrangement between the youth and the



1977: SYL campaigned against appointment of war criminal Kissinger at Columbia.

party. But it was, after all, the SL CC that initiated the "clone" fight and the rectification within the SYL.

This contrasts sharply to the pattern of youth-party relations between the SYL and the CLA in the mid-1930's. Proposals such as those posed by the SL CC (industrialization or elimination from the organization) would have been unthinkable in either the old SYL or the YPSL (4th). James P. Cannon (leader of the SWP) could not so much as glance sideways at the youth organization without generating 80 pages of documentation denouncing the "heavy-handed Cannon clique." The SYL and the YPSL (4th) were the property of the Abernites as was so starkly evident in the 1940 faction fight where the youth office served as the headquarters for the petty-bourgeois opposition. The youth organization was a parallel organization, hostilely competing with the party.

The fight over entry into the Socialist Party (SP)/YPSL in 1936 was symptomatic of the level of estrangement between the youth and party at that time. This opposition came not only from the sectarian Oehlerites but from the Muste-Abern forces in the party as well. The majority of the youth National Committee opposed entry when it was posed in 1936. The level of animosity between the youth organization and the party can be seen in the vitriolic denunciations of the "Cannon clique" for supposedly attempting to squash discussion in the SYL on the entry. The quote below, though from a leaflet produced for a special convention of the SYL by the Marxist Action Group (the Oehlerites, who split from the Workers Party [WP] opposing the entry on principle), accurately reflects the sentiments of the Abernite youth as well:

"Something over a year ago Shachtman and Swabek proposed in the National

Committee of the Communist League of America, that the SYL be sent into the YPSL. Opposition developed, and the matter was dropped. Again in November 1935, Cannon proposed the same thing and, in the face of outraged protest, withdrew the suggestion. Finally, in January, 1936, Cannon, who has been busily organizing and 'educating' his faction felt strong enough to come out in the open and boldly propose that the WP enter the SP, and the SYL the YPSL. Now, having won the party to his views, he is going after the SYL. In the last ten days a number of Cannonite WP members headed by monkey glands Carter, perennial leader of the youth, have entered the SYL in order to drag us into the YPSL. We are dealing with a carefully prepared scheme and with a crowd who know what they want and mean to get it."

—"Against Entry Now—And After the Convention"

Obviously things have never reached such a state of affairs in our tendency. The above contrast simply underscores one possible development if the party had not intervened to offer a corrective in the youth organization. Not long ago the party stumbled upon a policy which tends to cut across the possibilities for development of youth-party relations on the model of the YPSL (4th) and the SWP: the party has taken junior party leaders who have done a tour of duty in party assignments and put them back into the national leadership of the youth. We must now consciously seek to re-create that mechanism by moving some of our most capable youth cadres into major party assignments for a year or two prior to their reintroduction into the youth national leadership.

The history of the Trotskyist youth movement in the U.S. highlights the bankruptcy of the social-democratic model of youth-party relations practiced by the current SWP—attempting to politically control the youth organization by bureaucratically placing party members in the youth under discipline. There was a fight early on in the YSA over the form of youth-party relations; a section of the SWP had appetites to build a front group rather than a Leninist youth organization. The Spartacist tendency has inherited the hard-won lessons concerning youth-party relations as part of the political heritage of a section of our leading cadres who were not only founding leaders of the YSA, but also the leaders of the Revolutionary Tendency. The youth-party treaty adopted in 1971 established Leninist norms for relations between the youth organization and the SL—"organizationally independent but politically subordinate." Only if the youth play a real and full, if subordinate, role in the decision-making process in the movement as a whole will it be possible to forge competent political leaders in the youth organization and constantly replenish the party cadre. ■

**THE FIGHT TO IMPLEMENT BUSING**  
FOR LABOR/BLACK DEFENSE TO STOP RACIST ATTACKS AND TO SMASH FASCIST THREATS

Trotskyism versus Maoism  
**Why the U.S.S.R. is Not Capitalist**

Marxist Bulletin No. 7

The Leninist Position on Youth-Party Relations

Basic Documents of the Spartacus Youth League

**YOUTH, CLASS AND PARTY**

I. Program and Perspectives  
II. Organizational Rules  
III. Youth-Party Relations

Reply to the Guardian  
The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited • The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited • The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited • The Stalin School of Falsification

**Get These Trotskyist Pamphlets!**

The Fight to Implement Busing.....\$ .75  
Why the U.S.S.R. Is Not Capitalist.....\$1.50  
Youth, Class and Party .....\$ .25  
The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited ....\$ .75

Make checks payable/mail to:  
Spartacus Youth Publishing Co.  
Box 825, Canal Street Station  
New York, NY 10013

The Leninist Position on Youth-Party Relations ...\$ .75

Make checks payable/mail to:  
Spartacist Publishing Company  
Box 1377 GPO  
New York, NY 10001

## Fatima Khalil...

(continued from page 1)

agent, SAVAK agent" and then "prostitute" and "slut." Despite his screams of "I will not go!" this disrupter was easily carried out by his arms and legs.

Frustrated by their failure to break up our meeting, the would-be wreckers who had been tossed outside were reduced to chanting "Long Live Khomeini" until they were red in the face. All they succeeded in doing was to drown out their own buddies who remained inside the room to continue their scurrilous attacks on the SL/SYL. Having no political arguments to make, the Muslim fanatics could only repeat their litany of "SAVAK agent, FBI agent."

After doing everything they could to stop the meeting, these hooligans then had the incredible gall to claim that their democratic rights had been violated! But what they got was a hell of a lot more democratic than what goes on in Teheran today where leftist meetings are regularly broken up: everyone who wanted to speak, including a dozen mullah lovers, was called on.

As the audience marched out in a group after the forum the Islamic toughs spit and shrieked at the crowd, trying to provoke a fight. Right out to the parking lot the Khomeinists continued to waylay and harass the audience—until the defense squad suddenly turned to face the belligerent clerical reactionaries. The mullah lovers scurried off as fast as they could, tripping over a dozen of their number who were left lying on the ground.

The SYL immediately protested the outrageous goon attack in a letter printed in the *Michigan Daily* (11 April):

"The Khomeini lovers of the OIMS in attempting to disrupt our forum gave a taste of the kind of 'democracy' being set up in Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic'...

"They are in no sense leftists or progressives or even bourgeois liberals. They are the sons and daughters of the Iranian upper-crust who stand to gain from Khomeini's rule... They are similar to the fanatical Muslim students who in 1965 were the vanguard of the reactionary military coup in Indonesia which left half a million leftists dead in its wake.

"The SYL does not intend to be intimidated by these fanatics... We will in the future, as in the past, defend ourselves and protect the right of independents to take part in open political discussion."

### Fatima Khalil Will Not Be Silenced!

The mullah lovers' abysmal failure to defend Khomeini against the truth led them to try another tack. Together with members of the Communist Party-influenced People's Action Coalition the Muslim fanatics attempted to get the

SYL thrown off the Ann Arbor campus! They were particularly determined to prevent Fatima Khalil from speaking on April 20. But they didn't get away with it. In fact the OIMS and their Stalinist henchmen went down to a flaming defeat.

The Michigan Student Assembly (MSA) Student Organizations Board (S.O.B.) readily obliged the Khomeinists by suspending the organizational status of the SYL, using as an excuse a \$97 bill for a window—broken by the Islamic thugs who had attempted to disrupt our April 5 forum. The SYL quickly mass distributed a leaflet entitled "Fatima Khalil Must Not Be Silenced! Hands Off the SYL!":

"On April 5 an SYL forum on the fight against women's oppression in Iran was attacked by over 60 Iranian Muslim fanatics... The determined defense efforts of the SL/SYL, a large number of trade unionists and others routed these thugs...

"Now the MSA is bowing to Khomeini's followers, aiding their efforts to prevent Fatima Khalil from speaking... The MSA's attack on the SYL's organizational status is not only a green light for these fanatical Islamic thugs to attack Fatima Khalil's forum but it is tantamount to the MSA joining forces with them.

"It is an outrage that this woman is met with attempts to silence her! Fatima Khalil has directly experienced the chains of women's oppression under Islam. She knows what it is to suffer the indignity of being considered mere chattel and has spoken out against the veil, the symbol of women's subjugation in the Near East. She must not be silenced!...

"All those who are partisans of the rights of women, homosexuals, minorities and the left and workers movement—the victims and intended victims of the demonic Khomeini and his fanatical followers—must fight these attacks."

The SYL's call was rapidly taken up. Over 200 students and faculty signed an SYL petition which demanded that the MSA "not do the dirty work" of the Muslim "anti-democratic, anti-women, anti-homosexual thugs."—Almost two dozen representatives of campus groups and individuals came to the S.O.B.'s hastily called hearing to solidarize with the SYL and Fatima Khalil's right to speak. The Director of the Women's Studies Program, Science for the People, Farm Labor Organizing Committee and IWW all endorsed the SYL's stand. The president of the Graduate Employees Organization, a member of the Gay Academic Union, the president of the Black Student Organization of the School of Public Health, and representatives of the Young Socialist Alliance and the Bolshevik Leninist Group lambasted the S.O.B.'s clumsy attempt at censorship.

After almost three hours the S.O.B. "recessed," and came back fifteen minutes later with their tails between their legs. Their "Summary of Board Findings" was explicit—a total victory

for the SYL. The S.O.B. lifted the SYL's suspension, reinstated our right to use campus facilities, accused themselves of violation of due process and declared that they would act as advocate for the SYL in the dispute over the \$97 bill.

### For Workers Revolution to Defeat Islamic Reaction!

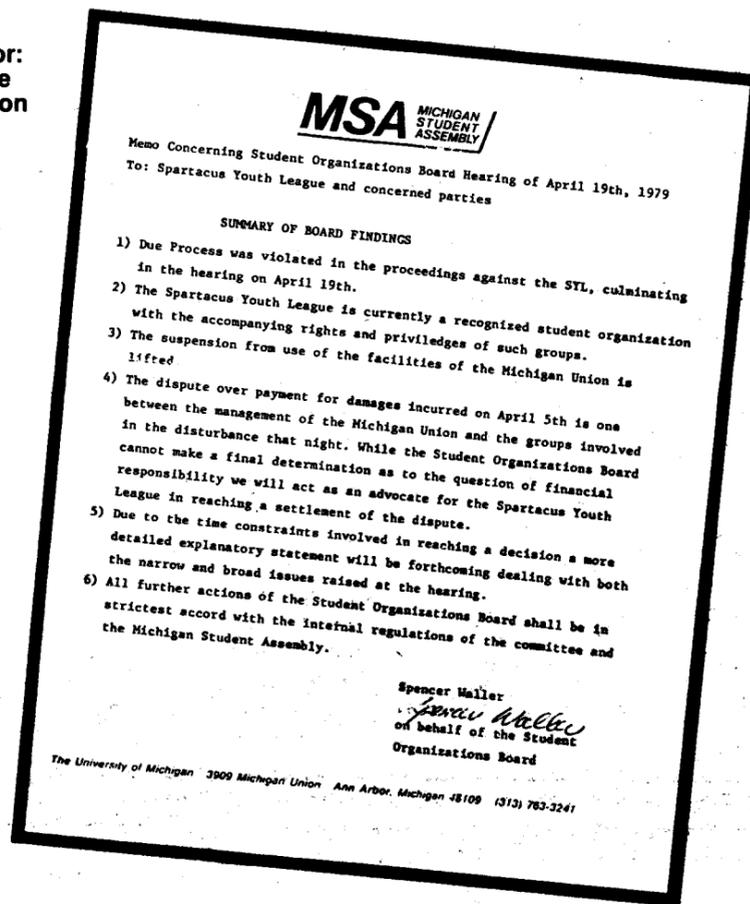
The very next night, as the frustrated OIMS slunk around outside the meeting room, Fatima Khalil spoke to over 100 people. Defended by marshals drawn from seven trade unions, this courageous militant, who has fought fascist reaction in her homeland, delivered the revolutionary Marxist challenge to

She graphically described the kind of all-encompassing segregation and oppression of women that occurs in such traditional Islamic societies and which Khomeini is reviving and strengthening.

Against the views of feminists like Kate Millett comrade Khalil explained that the bourgeois revolution means something for women, because:

"In Europe, in those places where the bourgeois revolution has taken place, women are at least considered to be human beings. For example, in Franco's Spain women had more rights—when they got married, they had the right to choose between continuing to work or leaving their work. In Iran only their husbands can decide on that."

### Ann Arbor: Complete vindication for SYL.



Islamic reaction. She said the words that make the mullah lovers' blood boil:

"Khomeini made it very clear what he wanted. He said he wanted an Islamic Republic. He said he wanted to go back to the 7th century... Today in Iran, many people are oppressed—women, Muslim minorities, the Iranian working class and left organizations. Since Khomeini took power, he said that about 300 women who are married to non-Muslims will be deported from the country, and foreign workers from Afghanistan and other Arabic countries too. When the Kurdish people started to struggle for their national independence, he sent his Islamic soldiers to kill those people."

Khalil's presentation centered on the liberation of women as a key element in the revolutionary program for backward semi-colonial countries like Iran.

But in the imperialist epoch only the proletarian conquest of power can guarantee even the most elementary rights for women in the countries where no bourgeois revolutions have occurred. Thus the Bolsheviks waged a bitter struggle in Soviet Central Asia against the Muslim oppression of women:

"They saw that they could not liberate and win the support of Islamic women without fighting against the traditions and their religion... They introduced new laws against early marriages, against forced marriages, against polygamy. They fought on the veil question... They were able to organize these women. In those mass meetings which many Islamic women took part in, they burned their veils. They were the first supporters of the Bolsheviks in those areas.

"And what happened is that those first organizers were killed by mullahs. That's what is going to happen in Iran. Those mullahs are going to be the first enemies of the Iranian women."

While Khomeini's mouthpieces slander all those opposed to the "Islamic Republic" as agents of the CIA or SAVAK, again Marxists like Fatima Khalil declare, "We are proud to be with the Kurds and the other national minorities and with the Iranian working class while fighting against Khomeini's oppression in Iran!" ■

## On the Move?

If you want to keep receiving your *Young Spartacus* please let us know at least three weeks before you move. Send your new and old address to:

Spartacus Youth Pub. Co.  
Box 825, Canal St. Station  
New York, NY 10013

### Spartacus Youth League Directory

SYL National Office: Box 825  
Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013

Ann Arbor: SYL, Box 89, Room 4102 Michigan Union, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, or call (313) 663-9012

Bay Area: SYL, Box 273, Civic Center Station, Oakland, CA 94604, or call (415) 863-6963

Boston: SYL, Box 188, M.I.T. Station, Cambridge, MA 02139, or call (617) 492-3928

Chicago: SYL, Box 4667, Main P.O., Chicago, IL 60680, or call (312) 427-0003

Cleveland: SYL, Box 6642, Cleveland, OH 44101, or call (216) 621-5138

Detroit: SYL, Box 20035, Ferndale, MI 48220, or call (313) 868-9095

Houston: SYL, c/o SL, Box 26474, Houston, TX 77207

Los Angeles: SYL, Box 29115, Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles, CA 90029, or call (213) 662-1564

New York: SYL, Box 444, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, or call (212) 925-5665

San Diego: SYL, Box 2034, Chula Vista, CA 92012

Santa Cruz: SYL, Box 2842, Santa Cruz, CA 95063, or call (408) 462-4037

### Trotskyist League of Canada

Toronto: Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, or call (416) 593-4138

Vancouver: Box 26, Station A, Vancouver, B.C., or call (604) 733-8848

Winnipeg: Box 3952 Station B, Winnipeg, Manitoba, or call (204) 589-7214

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

## Workers Vanguard

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

—includes Spartacist—

24 issues \$3  
Introductory offer (6 issues) \$1

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Publishing Co.  
Box 1377 GPO, New York, N.Y. 10001

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

YSp 73

## Nuclear Panic... Recruitment...

(continued from page 12)

nuke's arrogance conceals an anti-working-class bias.

That groups like the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) should leap onto the no-nuke bandwagon is only a testament to their consummate opportunism. SWP hatchetman Fred Halstead is touring the country to expound on the evils of nukes. "It's very simple to understand why I'm against nuclear power," he says, "this stuff kills." Well, so do airplanes, automobiles, subways, high tension wires, aspirin and alcohol—not to mention lions, tigers and occasionally rabid rabbits. We propose that the SWPers construct a womb-like hole in the ground—maybe then they'll feel safe!

### Harrisburg and the Pentagon

In trying to whip up support the eco-freaks have called up visions of the atom-bombing of Hiroshima as somehow equivalent to what could have happened at Three Mile Island. But the clams et al. are more interested in dramatic (and incorrect) imagery than in the real danger: the conscious decision of the American imperialists to use their arsenal of nuclear weapons.

It is significant that the no-nukes have nothing to say about the 500,000 tons of radioactive material produced by the U.S. military while they bemoan the 5,000 tons issuing from commercial reactors. The pacifist "ban the bomb" movement of the late fifties/early sixties had more concern with social reality than today's crop of environmentalists. The imperialists hold in their hands tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, the detonation of any one of which over a city would in most cases make the most serious reactor accident look like a minor mishap.

From "Give 'em Hell" Harry Truman (who ordered the atomic attack on Japan) to nuclear submarine aficionado Jimmy Carter, from nuclear blackmailer Kennedy to saturation-bombers Johnson and Nixon, each American imperialist chieftain has had the ability to plunge mankind into the holocaust of nuclear war. The question of nuclear survival is not the question of Harrisburg, Rancho Seco or Indian Point: only the smashing of the nuclear-armed capitalist military by the revolutionary proletariat can safeguard the world from the imperialist hell of MIRV's, Trident submarines and neutron bombs.

At the same time we unconditionally defend the necessity of nuclear weapons technology (including whatever testing programs may be necessary) for the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states. Imagine what the U.S. imperialists—the mad bombers of Hiroshima, Dresden and Vietnam—would do if they had a monopoly on nuclear weapons!

### More, Not Less

The eco-freaks are fundamentally pessimistic about the world. They see

(continued from page 3)

political subordination." Our practice contrasts sharply with that of the bureaucratic SWP, for example, which places party members under discipline within the youth group, effectively sterilizing political debate in the latter. The SL has sought since its inception to develop a dynamic youth organization with an internal political life of its own which functions as a disciplined section of the common movement. The impressive new layer of youth cadres recruited and tested in the past period, particularly in the Bay Area, testifies to the application of our movement's Leninist principles of organization.

### Recruitment Drive

In this period what passes for campus "struggle"—currently, "anti-nuke" eco-faddism and moralistic "divestment" schemes—has had an effect on the revolutionary youth organization, reflected in a dulling of a sense of the political stakes and the emergence of the "clone" layer. But there are potential young communists out there and the SYL must find the ways to win them. The present generation of students are perhaps resigned to the goals of U.S. imperialism but they are by no means converted. An SYL-initiated anti-ROTC demonstration at San Francisco State earlier this year rallied significant support. Black students demonstrating against attacks on minority admissions and programs at Rutgers, U. Mass. Amherst, Oberlin, and elsewhere have made clear their dissatisfaction with Carter's America. Even in the absence of great class upheavals in the U.S., international events have had an impact on

the social deterioration around them, the reckless pollution of the planet, cynical government cover-ups—and they respond with despair. Their answer is to try and halt technological progress, not capitalism. Other than returning to supposedly more idyllic "by-gone days," the eco-faddists and zero-growthers have nowhere to go.

The "good old days" weren't so good though: life was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Today millions throughout the world live in poverty without adequate food, shelter or clothing. It is not less industrial production that is needed, but a qualitative *increase*. The autarkic, irrational boundaries of capitalism must be smashed so that all mankind can be freed from the desperate want of the most basic necessities of life. Only a world-wide, rationally planned economy—communism—can provide the material basis for the flowering of human culture through the elimination of scarcity.

As Marxists we are optimistic about the future. We stand on the side of technological progress. While refusing to take responsibility for the capitalists' energy choices, we are decidedly against those who would arrest the development of productive forces essential to the future of mankind.

Some 16 years before the first controlled fission reaction Leon Trotsky wrote:

"The atom contains within itself a mighty hidden energy, and the greatest task of physics consists of pumping out this energy, pulling out the cork so that this hidden energy may burst forth in a fountain. Then the possibility will be opened up of replacing coal and oil by atomic power. This is not at all a hopeless task. And what prospects it opens up before us!"

—"Radio, Science, Technology and Society," March 1926

It has unfortunately been easier to develop nuclear power than to install the proletarian dictatorship throughout the world. The war-mongering bourgeoisie now has a tremendous concentration of nuclear destructive capacity in its hands posing even more clearly the choice facing mankind: socialism or barbarism. ■

## Who's in the SYL?

Just prior to the National Conference the National Office conducted a survey of the SYL's membership. The results, announced to the assembled delegates and observers, proved to be quite interesting: the SYL's members tend to be from a wide mix of ethnic/religious backgrounds and are relatively well-educated.

The "average" SYLer is just over 24 years old and has been a member for almost three years. Twenty-seven percent were recruited in the last year, while 42 percent joined within the last two. The SYL also has a layer of experienced activists—one fourth of the members joined four or more years ago.

The SYL is 61 percent male. Thirteen percent of its membership is black with another 6 percent coming from a Latin background. One quarter are registered students and 31 percent carry a union card.

Comrades came to the SYL from a wide variety of previous political backgrounds. SYLers have previously been members of groups such as Students for a Democratic Society, Young Socialist Alliance, Workers League, Socialist Labor Party, Red Flag Union, Socialist Party, Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party and a number of radical collectives and minority youth organizations.

young workers threatened with induction into Carter's "human rights" crusade in the Near East or Indochina. From these disaffected militant youth in the factories and on the campuses, the SYL can win new recruits to the revolutionary vanguard.

The SYL has actively exploited its political capital. Our statement on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam was placed in five campus newspapers in the Boston area. Our vigorous defense of our public meetings on Iran against Muslim fanatics for example polarized the Ann Arbor campus. On the West Coast the SYL has been virtually the only campus group to work in support of the recent militant farmworkers strike. The

recruitment of a growing layer of black and Latino comrades—including for the first time a significant number of minority women—increases our opportunities for intervention and provides new avenues of recruitment.

The Conference participants returned to their locals with a deepened sense of party history and a renewed determination to press forward with the new tasks we have set ourselves. The coming months will test our capacity to turn our projections into reality. We are confident that the next Conference will see many new comrades who have undertaken to transform themselves into professional revolutionists fighting to transform the world. ■

## Spartacist Class Series

### ANN ARBOR

Alternate Mondays  
Next class May 7, 7:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 4, Michigan Union  
University of Michigan  
For more information call:  
(313) 663-9012

### EAST LANSING

Alternate Wednesdays  
Beginning May 9, 7:00 p.m.  
Room C203, Wells Hall  
Michigan State University  
For more information call:  
(313) 868-9095

### BAY AREA

Trotskyism and the Fight for Workers Revolution  
Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.  
106 Dwinelle  
University of California at Berkeley  
For more information call:  
(415) 835-1535

### LOS ANGELES

Internationalism and the Vanguard Party  
Alternate Wednesdays  
Next class May 9, 7:30 p.m.  
Student Union  
Cal State L.A.  
For more information call:  
(213) 662-1564

### NEW YORK

Women and Revolution  
Alternate Tuesdays  
Beginning May 29, 7:30 p.m.  
NYU Meyer Hall of Physics  
Room 122  
For more information call:  
(212) 925-5665

### CHICAGO

Women and Revolution  
University of Chicago  
For more information call:  
(312) 427-0003

### DETROIT

Alternate Fridays  
Beginning May 11, 7:00 p.m.  
For more information call:  
(313) 868-9095

### SANTA CRUZ

Marxism and the Struggle for Workers Revolution  
Alternate Wednesdays  
Next class May 9, 7:00 p.m.  
Room 103, Oakes College  
University of California  
For more information call:  
(408) 462-4037

## PUBLIC OFFICES:

### Marxist Literature

#### BAY AREA:

1634 Telegraph (near 17th St.), 3rd Fl., Oakland Ca. Phone: 835-1535. Open Friday, 3:00-6:00 p.m. and Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

#### CHICAGO:

523 Plymouth Court, 3rd Fl., Chicago, Ill. Phone: 427-0003. Open Tuesday, 4:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturday, 2:00-6:00 p.m.

#### NEW YORK:

260 West Broadway (near Canal St.), Room 522, New York, N.Y. Phone: 925-5665. Open Monday through Friday, 6:30-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

# Young Spartacus

## Near Disaster at Three Mile Island

# Panic Over Nuclear Power

The accident they said couldn't happen almost happened. In the early morning hours of March 28 a valve malfunctioned at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. Three out of four "fail-safe" procedures failed, and as heat built up in the reactor creating a gigantic hydrogen "bubble" 60,000 people fled the area while scientists worked around the clock to prevent a potential catastrophe.

The attention of the entire country was riveted on this small slice of Pennsylvania. Would the "bubble" cause an explosion that would rip through the massive steel and concrete walls spewing out clouds of radioactive debris? Would a "meltdown" release deadly gas and steam into the atmosphere endangering the lives of thousands?

Fortunately for area residents the damage done was measured in the disruption of lives and pocketbooks, not in sickness and death. But for the anti-industrial eco-faddists the accident was the best thing that's happened in years. They grabbed the opportunity to play on the legitimate horror of a nuclear holocaust by falsely portraying commercial reactors as bombs.

The raging debate on nuclear power is irrational on both sides. The industry and its kept governmental agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, have said for years that reactors have fool-proof safety systems. "There is nothing to worry about," they've told us, all chances for an accident have been "designed out." The "no-nuke" crowd on the other hand sees nuclear power as some kind of Frankenstein monster loosed by mad scientists to wreak havoc on the world. To them nuclear fission is somehow more unsafe than the other methods of producing energy under capitalism.

Commercial nuclear reactors are dangerous. A meltdown could kill 15-100,000 people, devastating large areas with radioactive, cancer-causing particles. But there is no such thing as a no-risk energy source. The near collapse of the ecologically "pure" Lower San Fernando dam in 1971 threatened 80,000 lives. Mine accidents have caused the death of some 100,000 people while 3,000 die each year from "black lung" disease.

As Marxists we are not in the business of choosing for the ruling class which way people should be killed and poisoned to provide energy. We take no responsibility for any of capitalism's unsafe industries. Three Mile Island should be shut down not because there is something mysterious about nuclear power (there isn't), but for the same reasons that any particularly hazardous mine should be sealed up. If there are structural flaws in the design of Babcock and Wilcox reactors, they should all be closed. We are in favor of safety everywhere and denounce capitalism's inability to provide it.

Metropolitan Edison rushed their Three Mile Island plant into operation at the end of 1977 despite a series of relief valve failures, pressure gauge malfunctions and feedwater pump breakdowns. The big push to go on line was simply a matter of millions of dollars worth of rate increases and tax



Earl Dotter/UMW Journal

Dejean Sygma



**While coal miners die to produce energy, petty-bourgeois eco-faddists worry about dirty birds.**

breaks. Workers at the facility were forced to put in 40 consecutive work-days, sometimes 12 hours long, and were subject to speed-up and discipline for following safety instructions. Yet "human error" will no doubt be blamed as part of the "official report" on the accident. Control over industrial, including nuclear, safety must be in the hands of the workers, whose health and existence are directly threatened.

Present technological capacity is simply not used to make any industry safer under capitalism. Every corner that can be cut, every safety precaution that can be ignored, every lowest bidder contract awarded means a better balance sheet for the stockholders. The capitalists run even a technologically sophisticated nuclear reactor the same way they do a sweatshop.

It is not a question of whether accidents will happen. They will: inevitably gauges will fail at a crucial moment and technicians will surely push the wrong button and leave valves

in the wrong position. The problem is how to reduce their frequency and limit their consequences. There are any number of ways to minimize the dangers inherent in nuclear fission reactors. For instance they obviously should be built at a distance and downwind from cities. But to pose rational solutions supposes a rational economy—that is precisely what capitalism is not.

### No-Nukers: "Kill Miners, Not Us!"

The unpalatable alliance of clams, shads and abalones are not on their crusade due to a sober concern for safety, they are moved by an irrational, hypocritical moralism. Worried that a possible nuclear reactor accident might blow some radioactive winds onto their college campuses, the eco-faddists have dashed into the streets to demand "Get rid of nuclear power!" They prefer that the energy they use to power their stereos, heat their dormitories and manufacture their faded jeans come

from somewhere else. What do they care if coal mines are dangerous for miners, for the communities around the mines and for those who transport the coal?

Concerned about safety? What about the 67,000 workers expected to die each year from asbestos poisoning? What about the thousands who contract brown lung disease in the textile industry? What about the tens of thousands killed and maimed each year in industrial accidents? The no-nukers are more concerned with their own precious skins (as well as whales, seals, gulls and fish) than they are with the lives of the working class.

The protesters against nuclear power in no way represent even a distorted version of left-wing politics. The eco-faddists are part of an ugly middle-class movement that is concerned that the disastrous conditions with which workers have had to live for generations might spread to the suburbs. The anti-

*continued on page 11*