

Young Spartacus

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Iranian Leftists Tail Islamic Reaction

Smash the Shah's Reign of Terror!

Exactly twenty-five years after the Shah of Iran was returned to his throne in a CIA-engineered coup, the massive upheaval against Reza Shah Pahlavi's brutal dictatorship has resumed with undiminished fury. After the upsurge in May—when bazaars and universities were shut down across Iran, protesters battled police and troops in the streets and the Shah was forced to postpone a scheduled trip abroad to take personal command of the army—it seemed as though the intensity of the protests had receded.

But on the night of August 10 the protests were rekindled following a police attempt to disperse a meeting at the home of Hossein Khademi, a prominent *ayatollah* (religious leader) in the city of Isfahan and a follower of the anti-Shah *ayatollah* Khomeini now in exile in Iraq. Several of the participants at this protest meeting were gunned down by the police when they attempted to resist. Demonstrations began again at noon the following day in this industrial town. As the protests spread there were reports that the Hotel Shah Abbas, the refuge of many Americans, was stoned and a number of banks and stores were attacked.

While the Shah blustered that he would "strike the instigators of these disorders with an iron fist," tanks and armored personnel carriers moved into the city to enforce a dusk-to-dawn curfew. For the first time in 25 years martial law was declared in Isfahan as troops were used to try to force the city's shops to remain open and prevent a general strike from developing. By August 12 similar clashes were reported from Ghazvin, an industrial town west of Teheran, and Shiraz, in southern Iran, as police battled demonstrators demanding the release of Jalaeddin Taheri, a religious figure arrested in Isfahan the previous week.

Two days later four more cities in southern Iran were placed under martial law. But protests had also spread northward to such cities as Mashad, Tabriz and finally the capital itself—Teheran. On August 15, troops in Teheran opened fire on protesters and on the following day attacked a meeting of striking merchants held in the city's bazaar, arresting a *mullah* (religious teacher) who was addressing the crowd.

Iran was not catapulted onto the front pages of American newspapers, however, until a fire in a movie theater in the southern port city of Abadan took the lives of nearly 400 persons. The regime immediately claimed that the fire was the work of reactionary Muslim arsonists. Anti-Shah forces ranging from the Muslim leaders to the liberal bourgeois opposition National Front to leftist Iranian students in Europe countered that the fire was in reality the work of SAVAK (the regime's dreaded secret police) provoca-



Demonstration in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz, August 13.

teurs. The most prominent Shi'ite Muslim leader within Iran, Ayatollah Shariatmadari, condemned the fire as a "cowardly act" committed by "hot-headed people with whom we have no links whatsoever."

The facts surrounding the case are extremely murky. *Ettelaat*, a pro-government newspaper, reported that the drunken theater manager was arrested after the fire together with some of his employees. Despite the fact that a number of suspects were rounded up, none of them have been charged. The question of whether the fire was simply an accident seized upon by the regime, an actual Reichstag Fire-style provocation by SAVAK, or the work of Muslim reactionaries striking out at a symbol of "westernization" is simply not known.

Nature of the Iranian Revolt

The Shah and his loyal followers in the international media have made much of the "unholy alliance" between left and right in the recent Iranian upsurge. Government press accounts regularly blame clerical

reactionaries opposed to the Shah's pro-Western modernization, particularly his "liberalization" of the role of women in Iran, as the source of the current opposition. The religious character of the opposition gives the Shah the opportunity to portray one of the most repressive regimes in existence as "pro-progress."

The Abadan fire occurs in the context of dozens of attacks on movie theaters (generally bloodless), shops and cafes selling liquor (forbidden by the Koran), banks and other symbols of Western economic and cultural influence and on the restaurants and hotels frequented by Americans. These attacks have intensified during the Islamic holy days of Ramadan—a period of fasting during which religious leaders rail against attending movies, etc.—which began on August 8.

But the reactionary element within the opposition has not been invented by the regime's propagandists. The targets themselves point to a confused mixture of hatred for the American backers of the Shah and the

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Letters

SWP "Not Serious About Revolution"

EDITOR'S NOTE: We print below two letters dealing with the question of membership in, respectively, the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The first is a letter of application from comrade Don B. reflecting the considerations involved in joining the SYL and his views of the SWP after attending its recent Oberlin conference. Billed as an "active workers conference," the SWP gathering failed to draw trade unionists and gave the author a stark presentation of SWP reformism.

The second is a long letter addressed to Don B. from Tim B., the person who introduced him to both the SWP and the SL/SYL. Despite the casual use of terms such as the Cuban "deformed workers state" which are in flagrant opposition to the SWP's positions, the letter provides insight into the political pitch of the SWP. It attempts to dissect the SL/SYL's positions from the 1963 expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP (precursor of the SL) to the coal strike of 1978—but what comes through is the crass opportunism of the SWP.

Building a platform for liberal Democrats during the antiwar movement is okay because it drew new members to the SWP (as if German Social Democracy, for example, does not recruit). The time-worn slanders of the SL/SYL as "chauvinist" (seemingly obligatory for the SWP) are once again aired. Spartacist comrades descend in the course of this one letter from "brilliant" and "attractive" to being "afraid to think" and only able to "recite"—a rather peculiar combination.

But when all is said and done, the letter stands on the basis of "our party is your party"—the SWP's current push to attract feminists, nationalists, union bureaucrats, etc. The pitch to Don B. comes down to: even if you hold every SL/SYL position on the SWP's reformism you should still join. Program is secondary, after all, surely "we're no worse" than the French Socialist Party in the 1930's!

Dear comrades,

This letter is an application for membership in the Spartacus Youth League.

I began to take a serious interest in the Spartacist organization one year ago, under the influence of Tim B., a friend who was moving in the direction of the SYL. Living in Milwaukee, apart from an SYL local, for a period my primary attraction was on the basis of your press. Its technical excellence, combined especially with a Trotskyist program for political action, distinguished Spartacist publications as superior to all other press on the left.

The writings of Cannon and Dobbs imbued me with a respect for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as the original repository of American Trotskyism. Yet there was a glaring contrast between the sing-song reformism of today's *Militant* and Cannon's bold revolutionism. In fact, it was Spartacist propaganda which appeared to continue the militancy of the early SWP. To resolve this contradiction I decided to examine the SWP in the flesh, through its Milwaukee local.

At the first SWP class I ever attended, my friend Tim was rebaited out as a "Spart." whose intention was to "disrupt" the "educational." That really turned my stomach. A party that will not tolerate disagreement has nothing in common with Marxism. After that machination I lost all sympathy for

today's SWP, a party far removed from its Trotskyist tradition. Then, to my surprise, Tim abruptly joined the SWP.

In the interests of an exhaustive investigation of the SWP, and to give Tim and his comrades a chance to sway me, I accepted his invitation to attend last month's "Active Workers and Socialist Educational Conference" in Oberlin, Ohio. At the conference I openly stated that I am politically sympathetic to the Spartacist League, and had come to Oberlin to challenge my belief through political discussion. Given a similar situation, the SL/SYL would cherish the opportunity to win someone over. They invite political discussion. Not so the SWP. Members either began discussion only to break it off minutes later when it became "useless," or they would refuse to talk politics altogether. No concerted effort

was made to recruit me. Anyone who has disagreements, especially from the direction of Trotskyism, is considered unrecruitable. How true it was; liberals wanted, communists need not apply!

The SL had a substantial presence at Oberlin. SWPers, their sympathizers and contacts bought hundreds of copies of *WW*. Yet references to the SL were conspicuously absent from almost all presentations. Where possible, it is the policy of the SWP to pretend that the SL does not exist.

It will surprise no one who has ever attended a "Militant Forum" to hear that the "educationals" were excruciatingly boring. Class after rinky-dink class testified to the fact that the SWP has no interest in educating its membership. The theoretical level was abysmal. For the wholesale revisionists of the SWP leadership, confusionism is the "metho-

dology" whereby dissension in the ranks is "resolved." These "theoreticians" deliberately toss wrenches in discussions, misrepresenting everyone's positions, including their own, most often couching their sophistry in a Pabloese lingo about "dynamics" and "dialectics."

Cuba is a fine example. The SWPers at Oberlin were all over the map on this question. That is nothing new. But of late, the confusion among the ranks has run to epidemic proportions, forcing the leadership to commence a discussion period on Cuba over the next month, hoping to patch it up.

The Revolutionary Tendency (RT), precursor of the SL/SYL, was expelled from the SWP in 1963 for upholding the Trotskyist perspective for the Cuban Revolution. While the SWP majority hailed Castro as an "unconscious Trotskyist" and Cuba as a "workers state lacking the forms of workers democracy," the RT maintained that Castro's Cuba was a deformed workers state with the reins of political power in the hands of a bureaucratic caste. While defending the revolution against imperialist attack, the comrades of the RT fought, as the SYL fights today, to forge a Trotskyist party that will lead the Cuban masses in a political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and establish workers democracy.

The passage of the SWP into reformism in the mid 1960's compelled its leadership to tone down its uncritical support to Castro, since guerrillaism was hardly popular in the U.S. liberal circles. Many SWPers are consequently surprised to learn the real position of their party on Cuba as a healthy revolutionary state—a position which flies in the face of the obvious similarity of Cuba to the Sino/Soviet deformed workers states. Unwilling to squarely oppose the SL's revolutionary position, the SWP leadership resorts to lies. At Oberlin, the Spartacists were deliberately identified with the Healyites and consistently misrepresented as having the position that Cuba is capitalist!

The Cuban role in repelling the recent Somali invasion of the Ogaden sent waves of confusion through the conference. According to the SWP, the "internationalist" Cuban military is necessarily an "objectively progressive" force in Africa. But Castro has formed a reactionary bloc with the Ethiopian Derg against the just national struggle of the Somalis. The SWP's "solution" was to characterize the invasion as "imperialist motivated and supported," likening it to the CIA-fronted South African invasion of Angola during the 1975-76 civil war. The situation thus "internationalized," the SWP could support Castro and the "Ethiopian Revolution" against the "imperialists." This is doubly dishonest. First, the situation was not internationalized. The Cuban troops defeated a just national-liberation struggle. Second, the abject reformists of the SWP demonstrated the worthlessness of their claims to defend the Cuban revolution when they *refused to call for the victory of the Cuban troops against the South African invasion of Angola*, maintaining a scandalous "neutrality." This position, for the time being, has "disappeared."

In February, the SWP began implementing its belated "turn" to the proletariat. Auto, steel, rail, mining and trucking have been targeted for colonization. Implantations are made unsystematically, without regard to the strate-



Miners tell plain truth about Arnold Miller; SWP's Militant "edited" picture to remove anti-Miller slogan.

With Friends Like These ...

Dear Don,

First, to place things in perspective. The SL gives a distorted sense of their importance; a false sense of their impact on the wkr's [workers] movement. Objectively (Robertson has written as much), they are one of thousands of tiny grouplets now in existence who believe that they alone represent revolutionary Marxism. More significantly, they believe (again, like many others) that every other tendency is so degenerate that it justifies an *independent* existence. They are a type of outgrowth on the Left that has sprung up many times in the past only to die away at a later date (Robertson knows this only too well... see MB #2, I think). They are small, totally lacking in a leadership that traces its origins to the continuity of Marxism (with the exception of Robertson) and overwhelmingly composed of young, inexperienced p.-bourg. [petty-bourgeois] intellectuals....

The fact is that the SL's break from the SWP means nothing if not a break from "Pabloism." ... Now I don't mean to say there is no such thing as "Pabloism." There is. But the point is that both the European and American

sections of the 4th International rejected it. What the SL calls Pabloism today is the SWP's revolutionary Marxism.

You know the major points of contention between the RT and the SWP. But why, if the ISec [International Secretariat—Pablo's European headquarters from which the SWP split in 1953] was bad business, did Robertson travel to Europe in 1963 to petition the leadership of the Secretariat for admission of the RT over the heads of the SWP? Why, if the IC [Healy's International Committee] had already developed a state-cap[italist] position on Cuba, did Robertson run to London with the hope of getting the Healy franchise in the U.S.? Lest you think these are comments I've learned since I've been in the Party, let me assure you I've never discussed these things with anyone in the SWP (for the most part, they couldn't give a shit). This is all the result of my own outside research.

Cuba is obviously central. It raises the following questions: If the Cuban revolution produced first a "transitional" state (a strange, non-marxist concept... the RT's and now, the SL's),

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"Macho Revolutionaries" Front for Racist Backlash

**Workers Viewpoint's
"Separate-But-Equal" Maoism**

Mao Tse-tung once summed up the international political situation with the saying, "There is great disorder under heaven and the situation is excellent." But since Mao's death and the defeat of his closest collaborators (the "gang of four") in a bureaucratic power struggle, "great disorder" has prevailed instead among Western Maoists and the situation for many of them is downright dismal.

When the leader of the slavishly Peking-loyal Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (CPML) of the U.S., Michael Klonsky, was personally anointed by no less than Chinese party leader Hua Kuo-feng, the CPML's many rivals in the Maoist camp were thrown into turmoil. Particularly hard hit by Klonsky's Peking franchise was the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), once the largest Maoist group in the U.S., which split in two last January between pro- and anti- "gang" factions. Into the void has stepped the Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO), once a small predominantly Asian-American sect and now a contender for the leadership of anti-CPML Maoists.

Like the RCP, the WVO has maintained stoney silence in its press about China since shortly after Mao's death. WVO shares with the RCP a "secret" position that China under Hua and Teng Hsiao-ping is traveling down the "capitalist road." But unlike the RCP, the WVO has not suffered a debilitating split on this crucial question. Instead the WVO expanded its influence through a series of fusions in 1976-77 with local Maoist collectives and, more importantly, with the black Boston-based February First Movement. Its newer members, largely minority youth, have been recruited since that time by a combination of apolitical "community work," mindless activism and low-level "fight-back" politics.

Through its proliferating front groups, which include the Revolutionary Youth League (RYL), the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) and the National Coalition to Support African Liberation (NCSAL), the WVO has attempted to win a super-militant reputation as champions of black liberation. Formerly among the more serious Maoist groups, WVO contingents at demonstrations are now invariably the most apolitical to be found. With flashy demonstrations, catchy but meaningless slogans ("We're Fired Up, Can't Take It No More!"), red banners and semi-military RYL uniforms, the

WVO tries to cultivate an image of "revolutionary" macho.

But beneath the radical veneer is a political line which has put the WVO time and again on the side of anti-busing racists, anti-ERA reactionaries and anti-gay bigots. And it was this glaring contradiction between the "fightback" veneer and the Jim Crow politics which Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL) comrades in Los Angeles repeatedly exposed.

BusStop's Left Ally

In Los Angeles WVO/RYLers and their supporters found that their differences with the racist "BusStop" group headed by LA school board member Bobbi Fiedler were, to use the Maoist phrase, "nonantagonistic contradictions." Like BusStop, the WVO opposes "forced" busing while calling for "quality education" for all, i.e., "separate but equal" facilities in the Jim Crow tradition. The WVO, like the RCP before it, justifies this objectively right-wing line by portraying the struggle for integration as a trick invented by the bourgeoisie to divert blacks from the class struggle.

In fact, in LA, just as in Boston in 1975, the WVO appeals to the racists for a joint struggle against integration. "Communists," they wrote about Boston, "must go into both Roxbury [Boston's largest black ghetto] and South Boston [home of Louise Day Hicks' racist ROAR outfit] to conduct propaganda and agitation. We should go to both pro-busing and anti-busing forces to expose the social props of all sorts—racists, fascists, social demo-

crats, and 'liberal' misleaders" (*Workers Viewpoint Journal*, May 1975).

The WVO's despicable anti-busing line derives not only from their capitulation to white working-class racism but from their extreme black nationalism. The WVO sees black oppression as a national question to be solved through national self-determination in a fictive southern "black belt." Thus the WVO's defense of black educational separatism in ghetto schools only reflects their advocacy of the utopian scheme of black separatism in a rural southern ghetto "nation." But while the "black belt" nation nonsense is only a theoretical fantasy, the WVO's black nationalism is counterposed to a genuine struggle for black liberation.

the criminal logic of the WVO's nationalist politics was clearly shown in their attitude toward the recent racial polarization between blacks and Hassidic Jews which threatened to engulf the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn in an orgy of communal violence. There, the Black United Front (BUF) directed the black community's anger over the brutal cop murder of black businessman and community leader Arthur Miller not against the killer cops but against the large Crown Heights Hassidic Jewish population—seizing upon the despicable beating of a black youth nearly to death by Hassidic vigilantes. Intent upon channeling protests away from the cops, on July 16 the BUF led a 4,000-strong march on the world headquarters of the Lubavitcher Hassidic sect where demagogue Reverend Herbert Daughtry incited the crowd against "the yeshiva [orthodox Jewish school], the symbol of our oppression,"

and threatened at several points to storm the building.

In a smaller but similar demonstration one year ago the RYL actively took part in a march on the Lubavitcher headquarters, leading those who left the main demonstration to march on the Hassidic center. This year the WVO took the role of cheerleaders for Daughtry's anti-Semitic provocation, hailing his "progressive role in fighting against police brutality..." (*Workers Viewpoint*, July 1978) while railing at the "fascist" Lubavitcher vigilantes. The WVO, which claims to oppose busing because it is "diverting the white and Black communities from struggle against capitalism into an infight among each other," thus play the role of blind nationalist agitators for the most violent infighting between black and Jewish communities in New York.

The WVO's reactionary line on the Equal Rights Amendment for women is of a piece with their apologies for racism and anti-Semitism. The ERA is a simple statement of democratic rights for women—but for WVO it represents (you guessed it) "a bourgeois trick to divert the workers movement." The ERA, it seems, divides men from women, "feeds the fascist movement," and "is associated with moral decadence, with promiscuity and homosexuality" (*Workers Viewpoint*, March 1976).

As with their opposition to busing, the WVO in opposing the ERA denounces democratic reforms as divisive and as diversions from the "real" struggle in order to avoid the imperative need for communists to combat backward consciousness in the working class. But in

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George McGovern: Vietnam Dove, Cambodia Hawk, Ruling Class Turkey

"Do we sit on the sidelines and watch a population slaughtered, or do we marshal military force and put an end to it?" This imperialist call-to-arms was not issued by ultra-reactionary Ronald Reagan or George Wallace, but Senator George McGovern—one time darling of Vietnam peaceniks and liberal pacifists—addressing a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on Indochina. Calling for a UN-backed international invasion of Cambodia, he pronounced the crimes of Nazism as "very tame" compared to the atrocities committed by the Stalinist regime in "Democratic Kampuchea."

These remarks are certainly in the spirit of the other former "rad/lib" antiwar spokesmen like Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden who have stumbled over one another in a rush to dissociate their "respectable" political names from the Stalinist regimes in Indochina. But the bourgeois press which pants after every item conceivably useful in denouncing Soviet "totalitarianism" and bolstering the imperialist "human rights" propaganda campaign, is put out with McGovern. Even the not-very-liberal *Wall Street Journal* (23 August) ran a

headline entitled "McGovern the Hawk," sneering at him and fellow ex-antiwar liberals, "...having finished the task of destroying that [pro-Western] presence in [South Vietnam], they are shocked and dismayed at the news of the grim and brutal world that resulted."

It would appear a neat trick to simultaneously denounce a Stalinist regime and alienate the bourgeois press at the height of cold war ravings against Cuban "aggression" in Africa and Soviet "show trials." McGovern's mistake was to pick as a target Peking-backed Cambodia at a time when China and its allies are an important component of the anti-Soviet cabal lining up behind American foreign policy. Not very tactfully, the *Wall Street Journal* asked McGovern to knock it off:

"One of the few good things to come out of the sordid end of our Indochina campaign was a period of relative silence from people who took us through all its painful contortions. They should have the grace to maintain their quiet for at least a while longer."

As communists, we condemn the monstrous crimes of the bureaucratic regime of Pol Pot currently in power, while firmly opposing any attempts at imperialist interven-

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Boston demo 1972.

tion. A reversal of the Khmer Rouge victory in ousting the imperialist puppet regime and the reinstatement of the likes of Lon Nol would be a defeat for all the working and peasant masses of Indochina.

In any case, McGovern's turn to sabre-rattling represents not so much a threat to the Cambodian deformed workers state, as further evidence that this dove of yesteryear is, above all, a ruling class turkey.

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.

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Voices from the Ivory Tower

Genovese's Anti-Marxist Perspectives

"We seek to revitalize Marxist thought"—with this modest ambition a group of university professors in the United States announced to the world the appearance of their new journal, *Marxist Perspectives*. In an editorial statement penned by Eugene D. Genovese (the editor and the chairman of the Department of History at the University of Rochester), the very first issue (Spring 1978) proclaims that the editors have taken upon their thin shoulders a rather herculean task: no less than the resolution of what they call the "crisis" of Marxism.

No ordinary journal this, its goal is nothing less than to salvage the left from the "deformities in ideology" which, we are told, "no honest Marxist, whatever his political tendency, can any longer defend." Far be it, needless to say, from these fine gentlemen to soil their hands with the living struggles of the working class and the political battles to forge a genuinely revolutionary party; the authors inform us that, "the painful history of those revolutions and parties needs no review here." What follows is an unabashed display of academics reveling in their university sinecures.

The editors of *Marxist Perspectives* cast an admiring glance at William Appleman Williams, the University of Wisconsin historian, who served as their mentor when they were his graduate students in the 1960's. Since that time, however, many of the journal's contributors were drawn into active political movements around the issues of civil rights and the Vietnam war. For these academic Marxists the demise of the New Left was the signal for a complete retreat into the universities. Having made no substantive political decisions other than furthering their own careers, they of course place the blame upon the left: "Marxism, like all philosophies and world views, is in crisis."

These academics and cast-offs from the New Left are no doubt witnessing a crisis—but it is their own, not that of communists. It is not we who are thrown into a tizzy by the sight of Stalinists engaged in a criminal nationalist border war between "Socialist Vietnam" and "Democratic Kampuchea"; not we that equate the rise of petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes in Angola and Mozambique or the jackboot of Stalinist repression in Eastern Europe with the Bolshevik-led Russian proletariat's conquest of Soviet power in 1917; nor we that find the social-democratization of Western European Communist Parties under the catchphrase "Eurocommunism" intriguing.

A recent article by an associate of *Marxist Perspectives*, the renowned British historian E.J. Hobsbawm, expresses precisely this confusion. Titled, appropriately enough, "Should the Poor Organize?" Hobsbawm's dark picture of despair captures well the sentiments currently being bantered about academia's armchairs:

"Once upon a time, say from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, the movements of the left whether they called themselves socialist, communist, or syndicalist—like everybody else who believed in progress, knew just where they wanted

to go and just what, with the help of history, strategy, and effort, they ought or needed to do to get there. Now they no longer do....

"Neither capitalism nor its designated gravediggers are any longer what they were in 1914 or even in 1939. The historical forces and mechanisms on which socialists relied to produce an increasingly militant proletariat and increasingly vulnerable ruling class are

polemics because the substance of the political debate matters. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky spent much of their time writing polemics in the process of trying to forge political organizations capable of changing the world. For those that cannot stomach "ill-mannered polemics," the prospect of making the world "rise on new foundations" must simply

recognition of "many Marxisms" is an abhorrence for the inescapable programmatic conclusions of Marxism leading to the battle for the dictatorship of the proletariat (the term itself is anathema to most academics). Marxism provides the worldview to interpret and change the existing society: it cannot exist independently of communist politics and communist organization. Lenin neatly summarized this position in the second edition of *State and Revolution* (December 1918):

"It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they are to be found still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeoisie. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested."

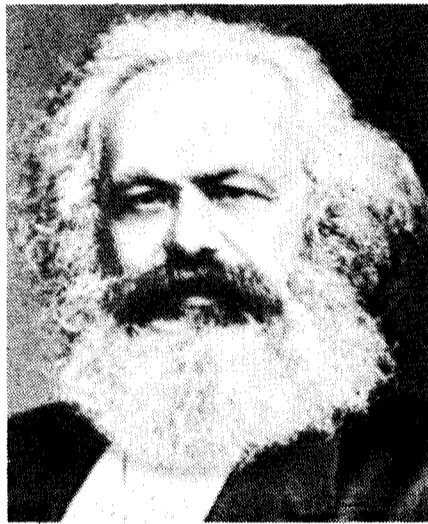
Nor was this new to Lenin. Marx made exactly the same point in a well-known 1852 letter to Joseph Weydemeyer:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did was to prove: (1) that the existence of class is only bound up with particular, historical phases in the development of production, (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."

To recognize their honesty, the editors grudgingly accept, at least halfheartedly, the gulf that separates them from Marxism. One of the more bold-faced statements in Genovese's introduction to *Marxist Perspectives* is a comment on Marx's famous dictum in his *Theses on Feuerbach* dealing with the need to change the world. Genovese in turn tells us, "An anonymous wit reflecting on the revolutionary upheavals of our age, has parodied that Marxists have hitherto merely changed the world, whereas the point is to interpret it. Fair enough, so far as it goes."

Marxist Perspectives is only a prestigious publication aimed at capitalizing on the increased "respectability" of this brand of "Marxism" in bourgeois academia. The journal graciously offers bourgeois opponents a regular column, "From the Other Shore," and even the *New York Times* has praised both the journal's "intellectual seriousness" and its "sound understanding of the market economy" (i.e., its commercial profitability).

But the rejection of revolutionary



"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

—K. Marx

"An anonymous wit reflecting on the revolutionary upheavals of our age, has parodied that Marxists have hitherto merely changed the world, whereas the point is to interpret it. Fair enough, so far as it goes."

—E. Genovese

not working as they were supposed to. The great armies of labor are no longer marching forward, as they once seemed to, growing, increasingly united, and carrying the future with them."

New York Review of Books,
23 March 1978

So, buoyed by such cynicism, Marxist theory is to be revitalized!

Not only are there no "perspectives" to be found here, but the editors reject outright the revolutionary core of Marxism. Genovese's brazen editorial statement asserts, "We are not a partisan political journal. Those who thrive on political polemics will have to publish elsewhere." Lest there be any misunderstanding, Genovese continues,

"We shall not entertain ill-mannered polemics; factional attacks; holier-than-thou treatises; or accusations of revisionism, dogmatism, adventurism, tailism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, Bernsteinism, rotten liberalism, or any of those other wonderful devices for avoiding reasoned response to honest arguments."

The irony of this statement is that in this journal entitled *Marxist Perspectives* Marx himself would not fit the criteria for publication. Would Genovese undertake to edit out the polemical "excesses" of *Capital*, the *Communist Manifesto*, the *Critique of the Gotha Program* or Engels' *Anti-Duhring*? What *Marxist Perspectives* cannot fathom is that revolutionaries engage in

be beyond the realm of thought.

In 1915, Lenin wrote that, "Strong ideas are those that shock and scandalize, evoke indignation, anger, and animosity in some and enthusiasm in others." Judged in this light, *Marxist Perspectives* offers only a series of weak ideas. With the exception of Genovese's editorial and an amusing piece by Gore Vidal on the American Bicentennial, this new journal contains virtually unreadable tracts ranging from Hobsbawm's article on religion and the rise of socialism to an insipid review of Yves Saint Laurent's latest fashions!

The pity is that many of these same scholars have published very valuable and thought-provoking material elsewhere, including: Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* and (under the pseudonym Francis Newton) *The Jazz Scene*; Christopher Lasch's insightful *New York Review of Books* essay "Narcissist America"; and Genovese's perceptive works on slavery, as well as his fine polemics (ill-mannered or not) against the fairy tale history books of Communist Party hack Herbert Aptheker and divers black nationalists. While these works are not to be slighted, collectively these people add up to far less than their individual academic contributions.

This is hardly surprising. Implicit in *Marxist Perspectives*' magnanimous

Denied U. of Maryland Post, Right Wing Witchhunts Bertell Ollman

The appointment of a university department chairman is not normally a fit subject for newspaper headlines. In the case of the chairmanship of the political science department at the University of Maryland at College Park, however, the selection of an avowed Marxist became a political hot potato in the Maryland gubernatorial race. After initially selecting Bertell Ollman, author of *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* and an associate professor of political science at New York University, the university withdrew the offer after a frenzied McCarthyite campaign against him.

The issue of Ollman's appointment was interjected into the gubernatorial race when acting Governor and candidate Blair Lee III questioned the wisdom of placing an avowed Marxist in the position of department head. Some of Lee's opponents reprimanded him for interfering with the prerogatives of academic freedom and university license. Ollman had originally been selected for the post over one hundred other candidates by a department search committee and approved by the chancellor and provost of the university. But Samuel Hoover, brother of the former F.B.I. director and himself a Board of Regents member, railed against the appointment, fuming, "I'm not for it. I just don't think a Marxist should be at a state institution in a position of that caliber. We have too many of those kind of people from up in New York down

here now."

When the Board of Regents and the outgoing president of the university couldn't find a non-political noose to hang Ollman with, the incoming president, John Toll, announced disingenuously that Ollman was not the "best qualified person we can reasonably hope to get," and that the rejection had nothing to do with his personal opinions or political beliefs.

While Toll and the Maryland administration hid behind this pathetic falsehood, their fellow-thinkers in the bourgeois media were more than happy to articulate the rationale for the denial of the appointment. In their syndicated column in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (5 May 1978), Evans and Novak raised the chilling specter of a recruitment belt of College Park students powered by Ollman's chairmanship that would swell the grim legions of academic Marxists. Right-wing columnist Patrick J. Buchanan contended, "For the university to plant this Marxist on the top rung of its department of government is to kick its benefactors in the teeth." Academic freedom, according to Buchanan, "does not exempt any professor from discrimination on the basis of ideological or political views."

The witchhunt of Bertell Ollman by Maryland politicians and in the press is an ominous attack on democratic rights-smacking of the worst sort of McCar-

Marxism has its own logic—even for these self-styled "interpreters." Not only have the two issues to date prominently featured articles on behalf of Eurocommunism, but a *Marxist Perspectives*-sponsored New York symposium on "The Communist Experience in America" in May of this year proved to be little more than a platform for right-wing social democrats of the Michael Harrington ilk. For these scholars who reject revolution and the Leninist party but who wish to apply aspects of Marxism or to be known as Marxists, the best thing would be simply to stay out of politics. Much better if Genovese, Lasch and Hobsbawm would stick to their own scholarly researches rather than dabble in the cynical anti-Marxism of the *Marxist Perspectives* editorial statement. Academic Marxism, insofar as it organizes itself as a tendency, can only become part of the periphery of social democracy—the defender of a comfortable status quo.

The fact that much of our critique of *Marxist Perspectives* can be drawn from quotes of Marx and Lenin is far from accidental. The attempt of academic leftists to decry revolutionary struggles in the name of "revitalization" is hardly a new phenomenon. Trotsky best summed this up in a 1923 speech at Sverdlov University on the "Tasks of Communist Education" (reprinted in *Problems of Everyday Life*). More than half a century later it retains its full applicability to today's academic Marxists:

"Academicism in the sense of the belief in the self-contained importance of theory is doubly absurd for us as revolutionaries. Theory serves collective humanity; it serves the cause of

revolution.

"It is true that in certain periods of our social development, there were attempts to separate Marxism from revolutionary action. This was during the time of the so-called legal Marxism in the 1890's. Russian Marxists were divided into two camps: Legal Marxists from the journalistic salons of Moscow and Petersburg; and the underground fraternity—imprisoned, in penal exile, emigrated, illegal.

"The legalists were as a general rule more educated than our group of young Marxists in those days. It is true that there was among us a group of broadly educated revolutionary Marxists, but they were only a handful. We, the youth, if we are honest with ourselves, were in the overwhelming majority pretty ignorant. We were shocked sometimes by some of Darwin's ideas. Not all of us, however, even had occasion to get so far as to read Darwin. Nevertheless, I can say with certainty that when one of these underground, young, 19- or 20-year-old Marxists happened to meet and collide head-on with a legal Marxist, the feeling invariably sprang up among the young people that, all the same, we were more intelligent. This was not simply puerile arrogance. No. The key to this feeling is that it is impossible to genuinely master Marxism if you do not have the will for revolutionary action. Only if Marxist theory is combined with that will and directed toward overcoming the existing conditions can it be a tool to drill and bore. And if this active revolutionary will is absent, then the Marxism is pseudo-Marxism, a wooden knife which neither stabs nor cuts. And this is what it was under the direction of our legal Marxists. They were gradually transformed into liberals.

"The willingness for revolutionary action is a precondition for mastering the Marxist dialectic. The one cannot live without the other. Marxism cannot be academicism without ceasing to be Marxism, i.e. the theoretical tool of revolutionary action."



Seven Days

Ollman's "Class Struggle" game on display at struck Brentano's bookstore.

thyism. While only the more right-wing columnists are willing to write off "academic freedom" altogether, Ollman's rejection is expressly an act of political victimization against his pro-Marxist views. Moreover, the denial of the post to Ollman is not a freak occurrence in the political climate of American campuses: for left-wing professors, ranging from black sociologist Harry Edwards to Herb Boyd of Wayne State University, securing tenure or even holding onto their jobs is often a major battle.

Ollman's defenders in this case have gathered an impressive array of supporters, from local Maryland politicians to reports that even Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, backed his appointment. The *New York Times* (2 May 1978) also editorialized in support of Ollman's appointment, citing in particular as proof of his respectability Ollman's firm commitment to the vigorous marketing of his popular board game "Class Struggle," which he touts as the socialist alternative to "Monopoly." Ollman himself, eager to allay the fears of his right-wing opponents, announced "I want to prove to academia, and even to the American people, that a Marxist can be a good and fair administrator."

Unfortunately for Ollman, as for all "academic Marxists," the class struggle exists as more than a game. His Marxist credentials were badly tarnished during a recent strike at the Long Island outlets of Brentano's bookstores. Employees fighting the \$2.50-4.00 an hour wages and trying to unionize were outraged to find Ollman's game in prominent display at the bookstores. Asked to cancel his contract with Brentano's (which is marketing "Class Struggle") for the duration of the strike, Ollman refused. An indication of his lack of political seriousness came in an interview with *Seven Days* magazine (August, 1978) in which he flippantly commented, "The game is socialist, but the business isn't."

Ollman's attitude toward the basic dividing line of the class struggle, the picket line, speaks volumes about the authenticity of his brand of Marxism. But we solidarize with him in his fight against the McCarthyite witchhunt at the University of Maryland. While genuine Marxists are not interested in administering, fairly or otherwise, the bourgeois universities (as opposed to teaching), the refusal to grant Ollman the post solely on the grounds of his left-wing views must be protested. Give Bertell Ollman the job! ■

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MENGISTU'S DERG: ETHIOPIAN NATIONALISM AS "RED TERROR"

On their maps of Africa the European and American media color it bright red. It has been variously compared to Lenin's Russia, Robespierre's France—and Pol Pot's Cambodia. But it is also the Ethiopian regime itself, and not only the arch-reactionaries, who see Cubans behind every bush in Africa, who call the daily killing in the streets of Addis Ababa the "red terror." Fidel Castro also calls the February 1977 shootout in the Derg (the ruling junta) "decisive." It is Castro who says of strongman Haile Mariam Mengistu's liquidation of his rivals on the Derg, "From that moment, the Left and the authentic leaders of the revolution took the reins of power..." (*Afrique-Asie*, 16 May 1977). And it is the 5,000 Cuban troops currently garrisoned in Ethiopia combined with the USSR's staging of one of the most massive airlifts in history last winter which has kept this "revolutionary" African ally in power.

Yet despite this massive Cuban/Soviet presence, the Carter administration cautiously attempts to entice the Derg away from the Soviet diplomatic orbit. Can this army, which drives Soviet tanks, wears South Korean uniforms and drops Israeli-supplied napalm and cluster bombs from its MIGs on the national-liberationist forces of Eritrea, really be the African exemplars of Marxism-Leninism?

Needless to say, the American mouthpiece for Brezhnev and Castro, the Communist Party, answers yes. The pages of the *Daily World* are filled with turgid rewrites of the Cuban press' fulsome praise for Mengistu. Despite such accolades in the left press, the Derg this summer once again demonstrated the fundamental continuity of its rule with the deposed "Lion of Judah," Emperor Haile Selassie. In June the junta began the largest offensive in years against the Eritrean guerrillas—opening the roads south of Asmara, the provincial capital of Eritrea, and relieving the besieged city, as well as such towns as the port of Massawa. While Castro's emissaries continued to bleat about the desirability of a "political solution" in Eritrea, thousands of civilian refugees were once again forced to flee before the Ethiopian onslaught. Ostentatiously withheld from actual combat, several

thousand Cuban troops remain in Eritrea and the neighboring Ethiopian province of Tigre and the Cubans continue to provide decisive logistical and communications aid as well as strategic advice.

Cuba has thrown its weight behind a regime which gunned down the leftists of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) after they paraded through the streets of Addis Ababa carrying portraits of Che Guevara. Thousands of corpses littered the streets of the city as Mengistu liquidated the threat from the left posed by these young Guevarists. Cuba came to the aid of Mengistu after this butcher had cut through the Byzantine factionalism of the Derg with the same methods he employed against the EPRP: wholesale slaughter of his opponents.

Amnesty International's report of December 1977 indicates the scope of the so-called "red terror." In April and May of last year large numbers of students and children (some only eight years old) were rounded up as suspected EPRP supporters. About 500 of these youths were massacred on April 29, 1977. By the end of last year, nightly killings of up to a hundred suspects occurred in Addis Ababa and at least several thousand took place in December alone. The victims' bodies, often mutilated and left exposed in such public places as "Revolution Square" in Addis Ababa, serve as a grim reminder of what the Derg's "socialism" means for the impoverished Ethiopian masses.

Mengistu: Left-Talking Idi Amin

The espousal of "Marxism-Leninism" in Addis Ababa has thrown the American left for a loop. While many speak of the so-called anti-imperialism of the "Ethiopian Revolution," the genocidal war of the "progressive" Ethiopian officers against Eritrea has proved a thorny problem for those who do not simply parrot the Kremlin line.

Like Angola, the other "leftist" regime propped up by Cuban arms, the Ethiopian junta hides behind clouds of pseudo-Marxist phrases. While Mengistu has the Seded group for a "Marxist" mouthpiece and promises to one day unveil a full-fledged vanguard party, the

ruling group in Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), has already announced the creation of "the vanguard party of the working class and leader of the nation which will guide the country to socialism" (*Guardian*, 8 February 1977).

Socialist rhetoric is extremely cheap in Africa, where every petty tyrant is a self-proclaimed "anti-imperialist." The continent even boasts the world's only "socialist" emperor, Bokassa I of the Central African "Empire." Mengistu and Neto are merely trading in shopworn "African Socialism" for "Marxism-Leninism." The tremendous social upheavals which accompanied the MPLA and the Derg's coming to power require something more militant sounding to appeal to the toiling masses than "African Socialism," which denies the existence of classes or class struggle altogether.

Unlike the MPLA, the Derg does not trace its origins to a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation battling for state power. It is simply the core of the now deposed state apparatus of Haile Selassie—the army and police—which has jettisoned the most hated and expendable excrescences of the old dictatorship: the monarchy itself, the Crown Council of royal advisors and the captive Parliament. Although incessant factional bloodletting has halved the original membership of the junta, this no more changes its class nature than do the continual coups in various Latin American military regimes. The Derg's core of American-trained officers remains intact. Furthermore, Mengistu especially relies on the elite Nebelbab ("Flame") regiment, which was trained by Israeli advisors, as a praetorian guard.

Restoring "Order"

From the beginning the Derg was confronted by a massive plebeian upheaval. Exasperated by the yoke of semi-feudal oppression, widespread government corruption which sabotaged famine relief, and rampant inflation, thousands of students, teachers, workers and rank-and-file soldiers demonstrated against the monarchy in February of 1974. Under the pressure of

its ranks the leadership of the Congress of Ethiopian Labor Unions called a general strike on March 7 of that year for several months. During the strike armed peasant groups seized the land while workers took over factories and plantations. Soldiers at Asmara and the Negelle military base mutinied and arrested their officers.

But it was the junta, a committee of lower and non-commissioned officers, supposedly elected by the ranks of the army, which "provisionally" took power. Above all, the junta sought to repress the labor movement and restore military discipline. In September 1974 the Derg banned all strikes and "unauthorized" demonstrations, and broke up student demonstrations calling for civilian rule and the court martial of Haile Selassie.

In fact, the Derg even attempted to block the abolition of the monarchy. In order to gain some credibility, the junta removed the worst feudal remnants, arresting some 160 officials and aristocrats in a "creeping coup," while proposing that the partially paralyzed Crown Prince Asfu Wossin replace his father on the throne.

The Derg's goal of restabilizing bourgeois rule via a few cosmetic changes was described by one officer in a candid interview with the German magazine *Stern*:

"Listen, we had offered the Emperor, to place himself at the head of our movement—he refused. We reminded him of the Shah of Persia, who made a revolution from above, as his throne and land were endangered by a revolution from below—the old man didn't listen to reason."

—quoted in *Combat* (Ethiopian Students Union in North America) March, 1977

National Liberation for Eritrea and the Somalis!

Nowhere is the Derg's continuity with the monarchy more clearly demonstrated than in its unbridled devotion to Ethiopian national oppression. From the beginning of its rule, the Derg continued the genocidal war against the Eritrean secessionists. After the junta promulgated the "National Democratic Revolution Program" promising the right of self-determination to the op-

pressed nationalities, it organized the infamous "red march" into Eritrea. Some 30,000 Ethiopian peasants were hastily armed, told that "Arabs" were invading the country and promised land and plunder. If they were unwilling to face the Tigre and Eritrean guerrillas, the conscripts were driven on at gunpoint. The "army" soon disintegrated under the impact of numerous mutinies and mass desertions.

This spring, the Derg's MIGs continued to rain napalm and cluster bombs on Eritrean villages in an attempt to break the sieges of Massawa and Asmara. By the beginning of 1978 one million Eritreans (one-third of the population!) had fled to southern Sudan.

On the one hand, the Derg parrots the claims of the monarchy that Eritrea belongs to Ethiopia because it was allegedly incorporated (i.e., occasionally forced to pay tribute to the monarchy) in one or another medieval Ethiopian empire. On the other hand, the Derg dons its "Marxist" mask to denounce the Eritreans as "tools" of imperialism and "Arab reaction."

The Derg's claims are devoted to suppressing the real history of Eritrea's national oppression. While under the colonialist domination of Italy from 1889 to 1941, Eritrea's economic development was clearly distinct from that of Ethiopia. There was far more industrial development and a specifically Eritrean proletariat emerged. When the British took over the Italian East African colonies after World War II, one of the earliest African trade unions, the General Union of Labor Syndicates, appeared during the struggles against the new imperialist masters.

With U.S. backing Eritrea was ceded to Ethiopia "provisionally" without the slightest consultation of the Eritrean people. Under Haile Selassie's barbaric rule Eritrea was forcibly annexed as an Ethiopian province. By the time of the 1962 annexation, all political parties, trade unions, the parliament, the constitution and all national newspapers in Eritrea were suppressed—resulting in

the commencement of the 16-year-old war for national independence. Moreover, since industrially backward Ethiopia coveted Eritrea's relative wealth, entire factories were dismantled and carted off.

Although Eritrea is not a homogeneous national entity, this vicious oppression bred armed resistance forces ranging from petty-bourgeois radicals to conservative bourgeois nationalists. While we militarily support these groups against Ethiopia, we entertain no illusions that once in power their policies will be any different from that of the Derg. As we wrote in April 1975:

"The continued enforced union with Ethiopia can only result in the further devastation of Eritrean society through brutal economic, linguistic and cultural oppression... Thus we support the democratic right of Eritrea to secession. We call for military victory to the Eritrean independence forces, while placing no confidence in their petty-bourgeois and communalist leaderships."

—Eritrean Independence Struggle Intensifies," *Young Spartacus* No. 31

Eritrea is not the only captive province in the Ethiopian "prison house of peoples." The Derg also launched a deadly campaign against the ethnic Somalis of the Ogaden province. Earlier this year Cuban/Russian aid had to be rushed to win back the Ogaden from Somalia. Marxists view the Ethiopian/Somalian war as a just war for the national liberation of the Somalis of the Ogaden who sought to become part of ethnically homogeneous Somalia. The Ogaden rebels and the Somali army were not seeking to conquer the Ethiopian state and oppress the Amharic people but merely to remove the Ogaden from Ethiopian domination. The massive Soviet intervention on the Ethiopian side in no way altered the character of the war nor the right of the Somalis of the Ogaden to national self-determination (see "Storm Over the Horn of Africa," *Workers Vanguard* No. 195, 3 March 1978).

To justify the retention of Eritrea or the Ogaden, the Derg and its Stalinist apologists point to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) "principle" of the "inviolability of borders." This "principle" sanctifies the borders, drawn by European colonialists, which arbitrarily divide various tribal or ethnic groups into fictitious national entities. While we do not advocate the "Balkanization" of the African continent, Marxists are opposed to the forcible retention of minority peoples within these states. Those who join with the assorted despots and demagogues of the OAU in

maintaining Africa's current frontiers set the basis for the Biafran massacre, the oppression of Sudanese blacks or Idi Amin's butchery of various minority peoples within Uganda.

"Red Terror" Against the Working Class

After the strike wave of 1974, the junta tried to restore "order"; i.e., ensure that there would be no independent working-class mobilizations. In September 1975, the EPRP working through the Central Ethiopian Labor Union (CELU) attempted to organize a general strike against the high cost of living. The Derg unambiguously announced, "Our Revolution will not be disturbed by strikes." On September 25, troops stormed a CELU meeting and gunned down several of the delegates. After a number of scattered strikes, the army entered the factories accompanied by informers to weed out the militant workers. Some of the militants were immediately shot; others interrogated and tortured in front of their fellow workers.

Like the much-touted Angolan "workers committees," the Derg's factory committees are sham "consultative bodies" which can only discuss production plans in order to increase factory output. According to Article 19 of the penal code, any deviation from this advisory function is a punishable offense. Worker discussion groups were also set up—as a stratagem to weed out suspected members of the EPRP!

Similarly the nearly 300 neighborhood *kebeles* are no more organs of the working people than the Angolan "peoples' committees," which were long ago purged of their Maoist, "Trotskyist" and Pan-Africanist opponents of the MPLA leadership and subordinated to the state. Given the organization of the *kebeles* on a non-class, neighborhood basis, it is not surprising that they are dominated by the unemployed. By 1976, the unemployed had become the main social base of the Meisone (the All-Ethiopian Socialist Union), a Stalinist grouping which had thrown its support to the Derg the previous year.

The Meisone was soon organizing and arming their unemployed followers as terror gangs against the EPRP. First, however, the *kebele* elections of the summer of 1976 were postponed in order to break the influence of so-called "counterrevolutionary elements" (the EPRP). Many of the *kebeles* became little

more than assassination squads for the junta. According to the June 1978 *New African* magazine, "At least half a dozen have a well-deserved reputation for concentrating on weeding out counter-revolutionaries and of dealing with them with extreme brutality and in some cases totally barbarously."

Each of the *kebeles* has its own prison, some of which can hold up to 700 prisoners. Estimates of the number detained range from 30,000 to 100,000. The prisoners are tortured into revealing the names of three "accomplices" (the EPRP is believed to be organized into cells of three or four).

The Meisone, however, soon reaped the fruits of its sordid collaboration with the Derg. When the Meisone raised the question of a civilian government and the creation of the "Marxist-Leninist" party it was purged from its role of braintruster to the junta and hundreds of its members were jailed and killed. The Derg will seek to destroy any left or labor grouping, no matter how servile, which exists independently of the state apparatus.

The Derg and the Peasantry

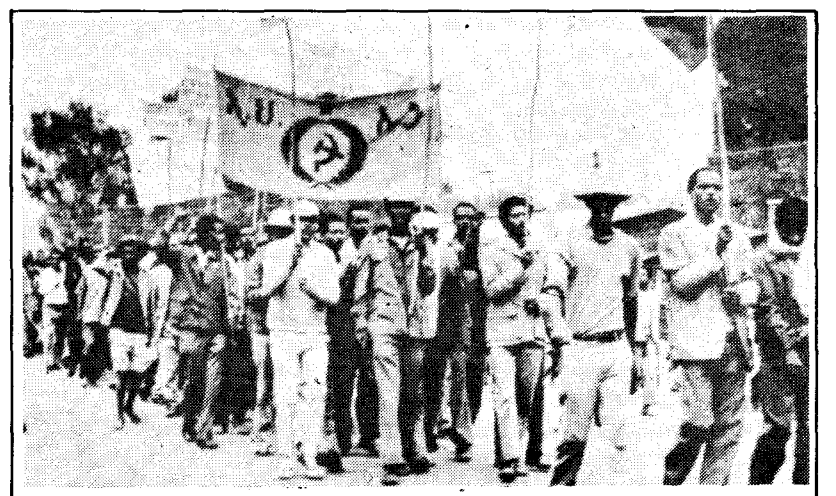
It is not only the proletariat that suffers the repression of the junta. In the imperialist epoch, the petty-bourgeois nationalists are incapable of carrying out such basic democratic tasks as giving land to the tiller, unless, like the Cuban petty-bourgeois guerrillas, they overturn capitalist property relations.

The junta cannot meet the needs of Ethiopia's peasantry, despite its demagogic promises. In 1975, the Derg decreed a sweeping land reform in the hope of appeasing the massive peasant revolt and buying the time necessary to destroy or capture the independent peasant organizations. The junta also hoped to destroy some of the barriers to capitalist development in agriculture (a step recommended by the World Bank in 1974) by homogenizing the forms of

continued on next page



Derg strongman Mengistu (right), the inheritor of former emperor Selassie's (left) prison house of peoples. Under Ethiopian "socialism" government supporters (bottom left) are organized into terror squads against regime's left opponents, primarily the Guevarist EPRP (bottom right).



Ethiopia...

(continued from page 7)

land tenure. The land reform was, on paper, an extremely radical measure. All land was nationalized without compensation, individual holdings were to be limited to ten hectares and the peasants' rent payments and labor services owed to the landlords abolished.

The junta's implementation of the land reform was not only bureaucratic and half-hearted, but it first and foremost aimed its blows against the forces capable of ensuring the program's success—the proletariat and peasantry. When fighting between peasants and the landlords and their armed gangs erupted in 1975 in the southern provinces, the army intervened to check peasant "excesses." The junta reneged on many aspects of the agrarian reform law. It declared that tenants would have to pay rent to the landlords from the 1975 harvest. Landowners who were officers were compensated by large pay increases, or the peasants were forced to continue to till their estates. Moreover,

much of northern Ethiopia was exempted from the decree.

The Derg sought to capitalize on the peasantry's onslaught against the landlords, which has destroyed much of the landlords' economic and political power, to consolidate its bonapartist rule. This led the Ethiopian aristocracy and their bourgeois camp followers to form the Ethiopian "Democratic Union" which has conducted a guerrilla war against the Derg for several years in the north. The peasant "army" (now dubbed the "peasant militia") only performed well against the former landlords of the Ethiopian Democratic Union. As part of its bonapartist balancing act, the junta has now pardoned and rearmed members of the smaller landlord class in the provinces of Bale, Harrar and Sidamo for use against the Somalis.

The Ethiopian land reform, like those of Egypt and Iran, has eroded the power of the landlords, but has *not brought land to the tiller*. In every case, these "reforms" from above were based on the destruction of the peasantry's independent organizations, and have led to the peasants sinking further into indebted-

ness and poverty. The Ethiopian peasants have been hit hard by soaring inflation and the "contributions" levied by the junta to pay for its incessant wars. And as even the Derg's secretary general admitted at a meeting of the All-Ethiopia Farmers Union this April, the peasant association chairmen (usually appointed by the Derg) have often reserved the best land for themselves and engaged in other forms of extortion and profiteering.

The Meaning of the Nationalizations

Within a month of its declaration of Ethiopian "socialism," the Derg announced the most heralded of its "progressive" measures, the January 1975 nationalization of the banks and insurance companies. In the following month more than 100 industrial firms were taken over by the state. For the junta's apologists, this is undoubtedly proof that Ethiopia is on the "non-capitalist road." But similar sweeping nationalizations have occurred in economically backward countries ranging from Peru to Burma. No one would

suggest that the sheiks who nationalized oil production in Kuwait did so for any other reason than to funnel the proceeds into their Swiss bank accounts. Even the Ethiopian monarchy wholly or partially owned sixty industrial firms in the late 1960's.

Nationalized property has a different content depending on whether the state which takes over the firms is bourgeois or proletarian. In states like Cuba, China or the USSR, nationalized property functions as part of a system of planned economy no longer subject to imperialist control. In such workers states, despite the presence of a parasitic petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucracy, the old bourgeois state apparatus has been smashed and replaced by a new state machine based solely upon collectivized property. In the case of Burma, Ethiopia, etc., no such social overturn has taken place. In these bourgeois states, nationalizations are an attempt by the weak bourgeoisie to develop its industry in hothouse fashion. In countries where the bourgeoisie is too weak to make such an attempt, the petty-bourgeois bonapartists step in and channel the proceeds of state office into

SWP on Cuba/Africa

If the Boot Fits, Lick It!

Ethiopia and Angola—pillars of the "new rise in liberation struggles"—the *Militant* of late informs us. The MPLA's intimate ties to Gulf Oil and the Derg's brutal suppression of internal dissent and secessionist national movements matter little so long as "anti-imperialist" rhetoric is churned out and Cuban troops bring up the rear. But for those struggling for the liberation of the African masses from grinding poverty and the legacy of colonialism, the Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) brand of "anti-imperialism" should be as suspect as Castro's intervention on behalf of Mengistu's military despotism in Addis Ababa.

Take for example a recent major article in the *Militant* ("Behind Washington's Threats Against Africa & Cuba," 7 July 1978). Here we learn of the Angolan civil war that the "imperialist invasion of Angola [in October 1975] altered the character of the conflict. It was no longer primarily a civil war. It posed a deadly threat to the anti-imperialist struggle of the people of Angola and their right to self-determination." Sounds all well and good—except of course that this is the same SWP which under the pressure of events refused to support the MPLA against the South Africa-led/CIA-backed invasion of Angola.

Instead, when Gerald Ford was trying to beat cold war drums over the role of Cuban troops in Angola, the oh-so "respectable" SWP wrote:

"It is important to note that the FNLA and UNITA did not serve as puppets of South Africa in this imperialist invasion."

—*Militant*, 23 January 1976

and

"...if the basic war had been between South Africa backed by the United States on one side and the MPLA on the other, as Stalinists all but say in print, it would be entirely different. Revolutionists would have been duty bound to defend the MPLA against the imperialist invaders."

—*Militant*, 23 April 1976

Behind the change of heart lies the SWP's desire to ingratiate itself to black student union types in this country. The scandalous "hands-off" position on Pretoria's attempt to domesticate Angola as a South African client state with the support of the FNLA and UNITA isolated the SWP domestically and even

provoked repercussions internally. In response the SWP has cynically come full circle, even giving lip service to the "anti-imperialist" pretensions of petty-bourgeois nationalist bonapartes in Africa—while of course eschewing "political confidence" in these anti-working class regimes.

Always sensitive to liberal opinion in this country, the SWP's current adulation of "liberation struggles" was given a huge boost by the mouthings of Andrew Young. It was Young's "human rights" endorsement of the Neto regime in Angola and his downplaying of the "Cuban menace" which gave impetus to the SWP's rediscovery of Castro's "internationalism."

Moreover, the SWP has tried to latch on to the popularity of the Cuban intervention in Africa among large numbers of blacks for whom the presence of Castro's troops is seen as a possible solution to continued white-supremacist rule. Cuban support is (rightfully) seen as having played a decisive role in repulsing South Africa in Angola. Ultimately the Cubans are thought to be the final reserve against Rhodesia's crumbling white rule and by extension against the bastion of racialism, South Africa.

Cuban foreign policy, however, is not governed by the principles of "proletarian internationalism" or what *Intercontinental Press* calls the "strengthening of the Cuban Revolution." Rather Havana's troops follow the dictates of a Stalinist foreign policy based upon dividing up the world into "progressives" and "reactionaries" depending upon conjunctural diplomatic lash-ups. In Ethiopia this translates into supporting the reactionary forced imprisonment of Eritreans and the Somalis of the Ogaden within the Ethiopian state.

In its eagerness to jump on the Cuban bandwagon, the SWP has even taken to hailing the "Ethiopian Revolution." "Regardless of the Dergue's intentions," the SWP states, Ethiopia is moving toward a break with imperialism and toward the "destruction of the landlord class and its institutions...." Nowhere is this despicable cover for Mengistu's barbarism (see accompanying article) more clear than on the question of Eritrea.

The *Militant* claims that "Castro, to

his credit, insists that he supports the right of self-determination for the Eritreans. However, because of his political support for the Mengistu regime, he has been forced into contortions on this question." The degree of these contortions was spelled out in *Le Monde* (15 August) which reported that Cuban troops piloting MIGs participated in an offensive launched by the Ethiopian army against the Eritrean town—and Eritrean People's Liberation Front stronghold—of Keren.

Additionally, it is undeniable that the Cuban support to the Derg's successful military operations in the Ogaden strengthened Mengistu's hand against the Eritreans, both by freeing up the Derg's troops and by providing invaluable military training and arms to be used elsewhere. The SWP's absurd claim that Cuban arms and experts have not been used against the Eritreans, but solely in the "fight against imperialism" is the routine apologetic offered by Stalinist syncophants—rivaling the Maoists' "explanation" that the Chinese support the Shah of Iran only in his struggle against the "superpowers."

With their swing towards Castro, the SWP has unleashed veteran Cuban-flunky Joseph Hansen, armed with a whole arsenal of rationalizations for Cuba's support to the Derg's terror against the oppressed nationalities locked within this brutal prison house of peoples:

"Castro, for instance, cites the right of the Eritreans to self-determination. It can be legitimately concluded that he has at the same time been weighing what the effect would be on the Ethiopian revolution as a whole if that right were acknowledged."

Endless quotes are dredged up to the same end, including some from Castro himself:

"What would happen to the revolutionary process in Ethiopia, if as a result of all these maneuvers of the imperialists and Arab reaction it loses a third of its territory in the south and all openings to the sea? It would be blockaded. Thus it is absolutely correct for the Ethiopians to struggle against the disintegration of their country."

—*Intercontinental Press*, 19 June

But given Castro's support to Mengistu, his "concern" over the possible "disintegration" of Ethiopia can only be used to justify support to the crushing of



Corpse left as "example" on the streets of Addis Ababa.

the Eritrean struggle. Though the SWP currently pulls back from this position, its support to the Derg in the Ogaden war was an indication of just how far they are willing to go to maintain their support for the Cuban intervention. Certainly all the arguments made by the SWP against the Somalis can be equally applied to the Eritreans, who are also supported by reactionary regimes and oppose the "revolutionary events" in Ethiopia.

Can the SWP really believe that a little rhetorical fancy footwork will allow them to dodge the fact that Cuba is playing a reactionary role in directly aiding the military junta in its vicious suppression of the smaller nations trapped within its borders? Bowing to the pressure of Carter's "human rights" campaign, the SWP is doing everything possible to manufacture major foreign policy differences between Cuba and the Soviet Union, so that it can tail the "progressive" Cuban Stalinists and avoid the question of Carter's anti-Sovietism. The SWP's portrayal of "revolutionary Cuba" playing an independent role in Africa is simple-minded in the extreme—the presence of Cuban troops in both Angola and Ethiopia has obviously been predicated on the support and military backing of the Soviet Union.

In the case of Ethiopia the SWP has taken up the role of left cover for a bloodthirsty military regime which, for purely conjunctural reasons, has temporarily allied itself with the Soviet bloc in general and Cuba in particular. Perhaps the SWP would like to go to Ethiopia to peddle its paper to the impoverished masses and oppressed minorities, so that they might learn of the tremendous benefits to be gained from the "Ethiopian revolution." ■

developing a full-fledged bourgeoisie. Another role of such nationalizations is to guarantee the flow of surplus value to the imperialists. The Derg committed itself to compensating the owners of the foreign corporations nationalized in 1975. As the Marxist economist Shane Mage noted in such cases:

"If reasonably full compensation is paid, this amounts to mortgaging the future of the country to foreign capitalists. Instead of profit and depreciation, the tribute to imperialism is now called interest and amortization. And this change of form is no blessing to the people of a colonial country. The ability of a private corporation to repatriate profits is limited by the market and thus subject to wide cyclical fluctuations. Payments of principal and interest on government bonds, on the other hand, must be met in both good and bad years, even if it requires great sacrifices from the native population. Compensation payments thus have the effect of transforming the national government into a medium for the extraction of surplus value from the native working class and its transfer to foreign capitalists."

—"The Colonial Revolution—Capitalist or Socialist?" (1960)

The Derg spelled out its continuing ties to imperialism in its "Declaration on Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia," which explained that, "There are factors which make the participation of private capital both foreign and domestic not only beneficial but also essential" (*Africa*, April 1977). This was confirmed by the government-controlled *Ethiopian Herald* (10 September 1977) which announced, "local businessmen and industrialists are also encouraged to continue their functions in serving the interests of the broad masses."

The Diplomatic Merry-Go-Round

The expulsion of the U.S. military mission from Ethiopia in the spring of 1977, the cancellation of U.S. military aid and the current role of Soviet/Cuban forces in propping up the Derg, do not in fact mean that Ethiopia has irrevocably broken with world imperialism. Nor does the Soviet presence imply that the country is now dominated by "Soviet social imperialism," as is

charged by the Maoist/Guevarist EPRP.

While delighted to use the Cuban role in Africa as a propaganda weapon in his current anti-Soviet drive, Carter has kept the door open to reconciliation with Mengistu. The U.S. conspicuously refused to back Somalia (another "Marxist-Leninist" regime that switched sides in the Cold War at the drop of a hat) in its battle for the Ogaden. In February David Aaron, Carter's Deputy for National Security Affairs, turned up in Addis Ababa to guarantee "better channels of communi-



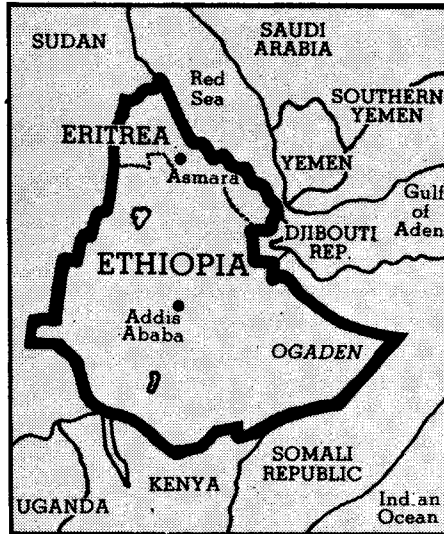
MPLA head Neto.

cation." The U.S. then permitted delivery of \$1.1 million worth of trucks and spare parts whose sale had been blocked last May. But nearly \$6 million in military hardware remained frozen as a means of pressuring the Derg into breaking with the USSR.

The more far-sighted representatives of American imperialism are obviously hoping for a repeat of Sadat's dramatic break with the Soviets and reorientation to the U.S. The case of Egypt is instructive, for it illustrates Trotsky's aphorism that "Imperialism... is not gunboats in the Yangtze River... but the political and economic bonds linking the native bourgeoisie with foreign capital."

Soviet diplomacy is a strategy of

endless pursuit of the supposed "democratic" or "anti-imperialist" elements of world capitalism, a policy of accommodating the bourgeoisie outside the borders of "socialism in one country." The Soviet Stalinists and their Cuban proteges believe that the Nassers and Mengistus can be bribed into allying with the Soviet bloc with generous supplies of T-54 tanks and MIGs. Such aid does not replace the economically backward states' ties to imperialism. Even before Nasser's death, "de-Nasserization," i.e., a return to a market-oriented economy and to ties



with the U.S., had begun. This was consummated by Sadat's expulsion of Soviet military advisors and technicians in 1971. Since there is no such thing as "Soviet social imperialism" the Sadats (and eventually the Netos and Mengistus) can easily break the Soviet connection and reaffirm their role as client states of imperialism.

As for China, it of course currently denounces the Derg, but only because of its links to the USSR. But in September 1975, Peking hailed the junta's "national and democratic reforms" and "fresh achievements in opposing imperialism and colonialism." In the midst of the barbaric Eritrean war, the Chinese Stalinists had the gall to proclaim that the Derg "supports national liberation

movements"! Even before this, the Maoists' treacherous Stalinist diplomacy, in essence no different from that of the Kremlin's, had led them to cut off aid to the Eritrean rebels and establish friendly relations with Haile Selassie in 1971.

Permanent Revolution or Permanent Slaughter

The blood-drenched Derg has all too many analogues across the African continent. Nationalism throughout the economically backward world expresses the appetite of the petty bourgeoisie to become a full-fledged bourgeoisie. The Stalinists' and petty-bourgeois radicals' counterposition of this nationalism to imperialism is fundamentally false, and denies its oppressive and even genocidal consequences.

Resistance to imperialism can be mobilized by the proletariat in the struggle to end all oppression and exploitation by the overthrow of capitalism. But the national antagonisms which the imperialists fostered to maintain their rule are now manipulated by bonapartists like Mengistu in an attempt to prevent the working masses from uniting in order to overthrow the privileged military cliques.

Despite its heroic struggle against the Derg, the EPRP remains tied to the Stalinist dogma of the "two-stage" revolution. The EPRP calls for an alliance of the proletariat, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie on an equal footing to carry out a "new democratic revolution." Since neither the rural nor urban petty bourgeoisie can play an independent class role, the EPRP's "democratic revolution" is merely a left variant of the Stalinist recipe for a bloc with the "national bourgeoisie." The course of class struggle from China in 1927 until today has demonstrated that such a bloc will realize neither national liberation from imperialism nor such democratic tasks as bringing land to the tiller.

Genuinely Leninist vanguard parties in Ethiopia and the rest of Africa can only be built in struggle against such illusions, and for the Bolshevik perspective of the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry and other oppressed strata. Independence for Eritrea! For an Ethiopian workers and peasants government! For a socialist federation of East Africa! ■

WVO in L.A....

(continued from page 3)

their "anti-diversionary" zeal the WVO invariably embraces the reactionary ideology it is afraid to fight. Naturally the WVO opposes democratic rights for homosexuals: "The bourgeoisie uses the gay issue to divert the working class struggle from its true course." For these puritanical Maoists, "homosexuality is a form of social sickness, a form of social perversion. It is a form of bourgeois ideology" (*Workers Viewpoint*, March 1976). Similarly, the WVO supports demonstrations against pornographic bookstores as well as the burning of textbooks in West Virginia as "signs of the spontaneous reaction of the working class against the bourgeoisie's attempt to dope us with degenerate culture and fascist ideology."

Maoism vs. Trotskyism

With their right-wing positions on busing, women's rights, homosexuals and sex in general, the mindless Maoist cretinism of the WVO is extremely vulnerable to the criticism of genuine Marxists. In Los Angeles the WVO was forced to send its supporters to SL/SYL functions—such as a recent class on "Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution"—to find out why sympathizers of the WVO/RYL were going to "Trotskyite" lectures. The speaker at this class focused his talk on the SL/SYL's revolutionary integrationist strategy to combat the segregation of blacks into the lowest levels of American society—while insisting that real equality will come only after the working class takes power.

The discussion which followed turned

into an all-out exchange between the WVO/ALSC and members of the SYL. To the ALSers' defense of the WVO's "busing is a bourgeois plot" line, SYLers responded that busing is an important attack on a key symbol of segregation: the schools. A key component in the ghettoization of American blacks is the prison-camp school systems in the decayed inner cities of America. Busing, far from being a "bourgeois plot," is a democratic measure to grant black school children access to higher quality education which Marxists must support. Moreover, we champion the integration of blacks and whites in all areas of society. A black SYL member summed up the revolutionary approach to integration when he called for a labor mobilization in alliance with the black community to "shove busing down the racists' throats."

The WVO was confronted again with Trotskyist politics at an ALSC-sponsored class on "Soviet Social-Imperialism" held in Los Angeles on August 13. The discussion this time centered on the key question of the class nature of the USSR and its role in Africa. The WVO speaker explained that the USSR was capitalist despite the state ownership of the economy because, "the bourgeois class doesn't have to be in control, but their ideas can be in control." SYLers exposed this as the idealist rationale used by the Peking bureaucrats to justify their anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. Both countries, the SYLers pointed out, are nationalized economies ruled by privileged bureaucratic castes: "the foreign policies of both states are bent on preserving their bureaucratic rule.... Yet we defend the gains of the USSR and China which are based on the

bourgeoisie having been overthrown and private property smashed."

Despite their covert opposition to the current ruling clique in Peking, the WVO remains loyal to their Chinese "socialist fatherland" and gives total support to China's reactionary alliance with NATO and U.S. imperialism. At the August 13 class a WVO/ALSCer excused the CIA-backed, South African-led invasion of Angola in 1975 (which was tacitly supported by China) on the grounds that the USSR, which armed the Angolan MPLA and Cuban resistance to the imperialist power play, had attempted to "colonize" Angola. The Chinese support for Zaire dictator and U.S. lackey Mobutu was likewise defended by the WVO/ALSC because, as one ALSer said, "we do support fascist leaders when they act against imperialism."

Dead-End Maoism

The influx of new members into the WVO and its myriad associated groups is a fleeting phenomenon. This organization's crass adaptation to right-wing chauvinism belies its every pretense to stand for the liberation of blacks and other oppressed strata of society. Despite the attempt to keep politics at the lowest possible level for the "fired up" members of the RYL/ALSC/NCSAL, WVO's political bankruptcy will eventually take its toll. A group of Maoist flunkies cast adrift among the many "homeless" organizations who have forsaken the revered "socialist fatherland" is living on borrowed time. Anyone who believes that "fightback" rhetoric and low-level "community organizing" can guide a "critical" Maoist organization through these times of crisis should simply ask the RCP! ■

Spartacus Youth League Directory

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 or 254-4236

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) 566-7806

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 Sta., 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, P.O. Box 2034, Chula Vista, CA 92012

Trotskyist League of Canada

Toronto: Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, or call (416) 366-4107

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

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

Islamic medievalism rampant in the protests. What is clear, however, is that the recognized leadership of the current protests in Iran is the *ayatollahs*, with the "liberal" bourgeoisie playing the role of junior partners.

These clerical leaders have as their self-declared goal the creation of an Islamic state. As the first step they call for the resurrection of the Constitution of 1906, a supposedly democratic body of law which emerged from the struggle of the *majlis* (parliament) against the monarchy in the 1906 revolution. This constitution states outright in its second article that the *majlis* will enact no laws contrary to the *sharia* (reactionary Islamic law). To guarantee this, all laws would have to be reviewed by a committee of five theologians!

These Muslim "democrats" openly boast of their support to the Koran—including the barbaric medieval custom of forcing women to don the veil, the symbol of Islamic society's vicious oppression of women. According to the "Report of the Patriotic Students of Tabriz on the Tabriz uprising," one of the battlecries of the revolt which rocked Tabriz in February was, "Death or the Veil!" (quoted in *Review of Iranian Political Economy and History*, June, 1978).

Phony "Liberalizations"

The diverse base of the protests, however, also points to the extreme isolation of the despised Pahlavi monarchy. Virtually any social gathering ranging from weddings and funerals to the daily commerce in the bazaars has the potential to explode in broad-based opposition to the Shah. As with Spain at the end of Franco's reign, Iran is reaching the point where the military (the Shah's primary base of support) must be on guard against any mass assembly.

The Shah's celebration of the 25th anniversary of his regime was a complete flop. The *International Herald Tribune* (21 August) reports: "The parades here drew crowds of mildly curious onlookers, but public enthusiasm for the display was visibly lacking. There was virtually no applause and the generally listless spectators did not join in the troops' shouts of 'javid shah' ('long live the Shah')." According to press reports from Iran, taped speeches by Khomeini denouncing the Shah are in great demand and any anti-Shah tape recording will sell well on the streets of Teheran, often for as much as \$15.

Hostility to the regime is so widespread that even such pillars of the Iranian establishment as Senator Jalal Naini have suddenly "discovered" that "the rights of the people have been systematically violated by the authorities." The editor of the *Teheran Journal* has similarly taken to complaining of the Shah's "ignorance of the real problems." According to *Newsweek* (4 September) rumors regularly sweep the capital of the Shah's imminent death from cancer or an assassin's bullet.

In response to the fragility of his rule, the Shah has redoubled the barrage of preposterous charges against the opposition—claiming that the staunchly anti-communist Muslims are being financed with Russian gold and that the recent revolts were organized by the PLO! At the same time the Shah has come forward with a flimsy "liberalization" plan which purports to guarantee the freedom of speech, press and assembly and free elections in the summer of 1979.

At first this butcher insisted in an interview with *Paris-Match* that, "I am the only person with the power, the strength and authority to set up a democratic regime." But in the aftermath of the August protests these reforms were already being jettisoned—according to the Shah, the "liberaliza-

tion" would have to be "modified" if the situation became "grave."

Proof of the Peacock Throne's intent to liberalize its dictatorship was supposed to have been provided by a recent reshuffling of the Iranian cabinet. In February police officials in charge of the province of Azerbaijan (site of the Tabriz uprisings) were fired. In June Nematollah Nassiri was dismissed as head of SAVAK. And most recently, it has been reported that Prime Minister Jamshid Amuzegar had been sacked. The liberal "opposition," always vigilant to leave the "channels of communication" to the monarchy open, quickly announced its support to the measures and declared that this created a "more tolerable SAVAK."

In fact the firings were in response to SAVAK's inability to quell the revolt—i.e., an attempt to increase the efficiency of SAVAK. The demoted Nassiri was sent to Pakistan, no doubt to insure that the revolt of the Baluchistani minority does not spread across the border into Iran. Simultaneously, the Shah has made a concerted effort to placate the Muslim leaders, by announcing that, "The grandeur of Islamic principles should get top priority." The "imperial calendar" was replaced by the traditional Muslim calendar and the office of minister of women's affairs was abolished.

But the reshuffling of officials and promises of "limited" democracy revocable at the Shah's whim will no more stave off the burning desire of the Iranian toiling masses for liberation from this murderous dictatorship than did the final desperate measures of the Russian tsars.

For Workers Revolution in Iran!

The predominance of the *ayatollahs* in the current struggles is in large part a reflection of the uneven development of Iranian capitalism. Side by side with large, modern industrial enterprises exist a layer of small merchants and artisans wracked by inflation and exasperated by the brutal terror and corruption of the monarchy. These economically backward petty bourgeois are the traditional social basis of the Islamic clergy.

The rapid growth of Iranian industry in the past few decades has led to an influx of rural and urban petty bourgeoisie into the proletariat. This newly created, politically immature working class has only the most rudimentary class organizations—trade unions, for example, have been successfully suppressed by the dictatorship. While these

workers have shown great capacity for spontaneous, militant struggles, they remain under the influence of traditional Iranian society, above all the clergy. Thus, while there is no doubt that large numbers of workers have been drawn into the current struggles raging in Iran, this participation is based upon subordination to the petty bourgeoisie and its religious leaders and not on political class consciousness.

The Iranian left from the guerrillaists of the Organization of the Peoples Fedayeen (Self-Sacrificing) Guerrillas (OIPFG) to the various Maoist groupings, whether loyal to Albania or China,



Charred ruins of Abadan theater in which 400 died.

to the pro-Moscow Tudeh party have refused to wage a political struggle against the increasing political/religious influence of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie on the proletariat. (The most hard-line China loyalists can barely posture as "anti-Shah" militants as Hua Kuo-feng arrives in Teheran at the height of the protests to pay respects to the "anti-superpower" Shah.) The "critical" Maoists, while they launch vehement attacks on the reformism of the Tudeh party and on its liberal bourgeois allies, praise Khomeini as the leader of the "progressive clergy" and an "anti-imperialist."

Let us remind these "Marxist-Leninists" of Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Question, presented to the Second Congress of the Comintern. Lenin stressed, "...the need for a struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements in backward countries" and "...the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends which strive to

appearances later, John's court file was "lost," which put the case in the nether world of legal limbo. The file was "discovered" two weeks later and the case continued until June 27. On June 27, the judge himself was nowhere to be found, having been temporarily assigned to another court. On July 5, he refused to rule, arguing that the state's attorney who originally contested Thomas' dismissal motion should be present to hear his decision. (The state's attorney in question never did show up.) On July 14 the defendant, his lawyer and supporters appeared but the judge again did not, being on vacation. Finally, two appearances later, the case was dismissed.

The "outside agitator" case against Sandor John was originally launched by the UICC administration (and eagerly picked up by its lackeys on the student newspaper) as part of a systematic campaign to harass the campus left. By arresting a prominent SYL spokesman and then dragging him through the muck and mire of the courts, the administration hoped to silence the SYL. Instead, the aggressive campaign to publicize John's victimization (which attracted broad media coverage), was successful in turning back the administration's arrest and forcing the court victory. Now, after months of witch-hunting John and the SYL, the administration is trying to write off the arrest

combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mullahs, etc." The red flag of communism is irrevocably opposed to the red flag of Shi'ite Islam.

There is a burning need for a Leninist vanguard party to wage the necessary struggle for proletarian class consciousness. The Iranian guerrillaists and Stalinists are incapable of making such a struggle since they are mired in class collaboration, the historic barrier to the Iranian revolution. The entire Iranian left continues to praise the bourgeois nationalist government of Mossadeq which was overthrown by the Shah in 1953. They confuse the necessary task of defending the 1953 nationalizations of the oil fields from reactionary attack with *political support* to this bourgeois politician who was ultimately far more hostile to the mass movement of the workers and peasants than he was to the monarchy or U.S. imperialism.

Imperialism can only be expelled from Iran and land given to the tiller by the weapons of the class struggle and the victory of the working class. The democratic tasks will be won only with the triumph of a workers and peasants government. Yet the latter-day Mensheviks and Narodniks seek to restrain the Iranian masses within the bounds of a "democratic stage" of the revolution. And in this "two-stage" schema it is the *ayatollahs* and bourgeois nationalists who would reap the benefits of the struggles of the Iranian workers and peasants.

Indonesia provides a stark example of how the Stalinist dogma of the "anti-imperialist alliance" will bring disaster down on the heads of the proletariat. For it was there, in 1965, that more than half a million Communist and working-class militants were massacred by the army and fanatical reactionary Muslim students. The leaders of the Communist Party of Indonesia had politically, and literally, disarmed their followers on the eve of this onslaught by its alliance with the bourgeois nationalist Sukarno.

It is Trotskyism, the Leninism of our times, which stands on the heritage of the Russian October Revolution. The precondition for the proletariat drawing all segments of the oppressed behind it in the battle for state power is the struggle for proletarian independence through the construction of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party. Down with the butcher Shah! For an Iranian Trotskyist party! For a workers and peasants government in Iran! ■

and prosecution as "unfortunate." According to one anonymous campus official, "The whole incident was unfortunate and really shouldn't have happened. Some people felt that John forced the issue. But that didn't make the arrest right" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 August).

Having successfully defended itself from the Circle administration's anti-communist attack, the SYL will pursue its work at Circle with redoubled energy. We have shown we will neither be intimidated nor silenced by the administration's bans and arrests. What these two-bit McCarthys tried so frantically to prevent is exactly what the SYL will continue to do: to actively fight for the program of revolutionary Marxism and to win young people to the struggle for the socialist revolution. ■

Despite this victory, outstanding legal expenses remain. *Young Spartacus* urges its readers to aid this campaign with a contribution to the Sandor John Defense Fund, which is being administered by the Partisan Defense Committee. Please send contributions/make checks payable to: Partisan Defense Committee (earmarked Sandor John Defense Fund) P.O. Box 6729, Main P.O., Chicago, Illinois, 60680.

Sandor John...

(continued from page 12)

ment, Circle Women's Liberation Union, the Young Socialist Alliance, numerous professors both at Circle and at schools across the country, labor leaders, newspaper columnists, and a large number of individuals including Noam Chomsky and Robert Meeropol (son of 1950's witchhunt victims Julius and Ethel Rosenberg).

Throughout the campaign, the SYL and PDC (Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, anti-sectarian defense organization which is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League) emphasized that we put *no confidence in the "justice" of the capitalist courts*. Despite its eventual outcome, during the case itself the courts engaged in a mockery of justice. The case should have been thrown out *immediately* on the basis of the brazenly unconstitutional arrest.

Instead, there were months and months of filibustering and stalling (translating, of course, into hundreds and hundreds of dollars in legal fees and other expenses for the defense) as one court appointment after another came to naught. Defense attorney Thomas submitted a motion to dismiss on January 30. On April 22, two court

Friends Like These...

(continued from page 2)

and then *immediately* afterward, a *deformed* workers state requiring all rev.'s [revolutionaries] to demand a political revolution there... (i) how should rev.'s have conducted a defense of this state against imperialism seeing that the Am. [erican] bourg. was taking active steps to invade Cuba (which they in fact did) and to discredit the results of the revolution; and (ii) could the Cuban leadership at that time (or even today) meaningfully be called "Stalinist."

Compare MB #4 (on Cuba) with the Ed. for Soc. [the SL's *Marxist Bulletin* and the SWP's *Education for Socialists*] bulletin entitled *The Nature of the Cuban Revolution*. The second article in this pamphlet by Hansen is invaluable—brilliant. It is also of special use to you since it directly confronts the positions of Mage, Wohlforth, and Robertson. If you read nothing else, I urge you to read (and study) this pamphlet in its entirety. Keep in mind that Trotsky watched the Soviet bureaucracy whittle away the gains of October for about seven years before he came to the conclusion that they were unreformable... and this only in response to specific historical events—the victory of fascism in Germany and the Kremlin's responsibility for it. A revolution accomplished without a Trotskyist leadership does not oblige Trotskyists immediately to demand their overthrow. Far from it.

For those who remember that period in America, the SL appeared to them as a group *opposed* to the Cuban revolution. Why? They reserved their heaviest artillery in public for the Cuban leadership. Their side-comments about how, after all, they defended the Cuban state against imperialist attack didn't really mean much to people. Because there were groups set up to defend Cuba which they'd have nothing to do with (too "reformist" for them), and because they did nothing actively to defend the state except to pay lip service to doctrine in the pages of their irrelevant press. In reality, defense of the Cuban state meant the mobilization of large numbers of people to express their support for Cuba as against the U.S. military; it meant affecting public opinion (we don't all have the privilege of being communists). One hasn't four hours to explain the fine points of one's arguments under such conditions (which, as far as the SL was concerned, was only half their problem). So the SWP emphasized: **DEFEND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION; the SL: DOWN WITH THE PETIT-BOURGEOIS LEADERSHIP.** Read about it....

If my outlook is correct, how do I explain the SL's appeal to elements like myself and now you? To begin with, they have brilliant people. Their press and forums are eloquence and fire.... Their political positions are wonderfully precise (at least originally); when you read MB #9, everything fits into place like a jigsaw puzzle. Beyond this, they have a specialty. There is no better place than *WV* to read about the ins and outs of every ORO [ostensibly revolutionary organization] in the entire world. Their

extensive knowledge of the international "Left" is second to none. This has been displayed most recently by their articles on the RCP, the SLP and British Trotskyism (a recent SWP circular even urged comrades to read the SL's account of the RCP split; at that time, the information could not easily be found anywhere else). Their dazzling textualism (I admit it) is attractive to people...the campuses are their bread and butter.

But they make such primitive errors. They are unable to distinguish between slogans and active intervention (please re-read Trotsky's "From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene" in *In Defense.... [In Defense of Marxism]* on Shachtman's literariness). They believe that an updated restatement of the formulations of Lenin and Trotsky in their public organ, *WV*, fulfills their revolutionary obligations towards the substance of those proclamations. In so doing, they completely miss the fact that Lenin and Trotsky were describing in an essential (i.e. abstract) manner what the comrades of the International should be putting into practice. They miss the praxis and are overwhelmed with the verbal. There is no such thing as evolution to them; the world was arrested in 1917 and cannot move until socialism triumphs. Between socialist and bourgeois consciousness, there are absolutely no gradations (they have stated this explicitly) and from total dormancy, the w-c [working class] of the U.S. will be moved (in a series of mystical leaps) to embrace their programme in its entirety....

One final consideration. Even if the SWP were everything the SL says it is, would that prevent them from "entering" the SWP to win comrades from the bureaucratic leadership? Think about it. What did Trotsky write in 1934 about the French section's proposed entry into the Socialist Party? Under what conditions did the CLA fuse with the Musteites in 1934; or enter the American SP later? In short, how does the SL hope to win cadres with the SWP, DSOC, the CP, and even miniscule "Trotskyist" groups like the RCL, WL, IS, etc. standing in the way?

There is only one way the SL can justify their refusal to "enter" the SWP—by concocting outrageous myths about the nature of the SWP:

- there is no internal democracy
- they no longer defend the Soviet Union
- their [sic] tail the democratic party
- their membership is not *worth* getting since they have been recruited to bland reformism.

Do not *all* of these things apply to your typical Socialist Party? Did it prevent Trotsky from advocating entry under such conditions? Let me tell you, Don, that short of tactical differences, I hold (with a few exceptions) the same basic political convictions I did a year ago. And I tell you, that I have seen *with my own eyes* that these SL charges are hollow slanders based on a phrase here or a sentence there and blown out of proportion....

I hope you won't be offended by what I'm about to write, but then again, this is not the place for formalities. I couldn't help but notice in your letter a similarity to Trotsky's letter to Shachtman in *In*

Defense of Marxism. At one point, in reference to Shachtman's solidarity with the petit-bourgeois opposition, he states, "I believe you are on the wrong side of the barricades, my dear friend." It is fascinating to me that you should echo Trotsky's words (whether consciously or not) in defense of the SL, when the entire book in which these words appear is dedicated to the fight against an opposition tendency within the SWP that, under the banner of resistance to a "bureaucratic party regime", sought to renege on its defense of a workers state under intense bourgeois pressures. The similarities between the RT and the Burnham-Shachtman grouping in this respect are obvious, and could not have been missed by those who, in both instances, sided with the majority—Hansen, Dobbs, Cannon. You will be quick to point out the differences between the two cases, and you are right. But I would go back and re-study the development of that famous split to decide whether the differences are essential ones, or only a matter of degree.

I have to admit that in reading your letter, I was also reminded of what Marx wrote at the beginning of *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in reference to the French Revolutions of 1791 and 1848. He said that a great historian once wrote that historical events have a tendency of repeating themselves, but that this historian forgot to add that they occur the first time as "drama" and the second time as "farce."

The arguments I've given you against Spartacism are misleading in at least one sense. They create the impression that there is a crucial, ongoing debate between the SL and the SWP over the true heritage of Trotskyism—something of interest to the entire Left and the workers movement. This is not true. As always, our major opponents are the reformists: the Social Democrats and the Stalinists. Sectarianism, by its very nature, is always small, always static. To be completely truthful, I have no taste for these arguments any longer, but felt moved to reply because I did not want to see you waste your enormous energies on an organization that obstructs the progress of the class struggle, something that George Novack called a "corrosive acid on the workers movement."

Letter on SWP...

(continued from page 2)

gic importance of each particular plant. If the ranks can get hired and if the plant is unionized, "throw 'em in!" Original projections were to have half the membership of every local colonized this year. As of Oberlin one out of four locals had reached its quota. The leadership has understandably encountered heavy resistance from the ranks to be hastily "thrown" into basic industry and transportation without any preparation or perspective. Besides, few SWPers join the party with the intention of ever becoming proletarian militants. This resistance to what Jack Barnes calls "the forced march" is widespread, and attrition is already rampant. An immediate task of the Oberlin conference was to hold the ranks in line while the turn to the Sadlowskis and Millers is made.

No one should be fooled by the SWP's belated proletarian turn. The SWPers who survive this turn will simply play the role of a left cover for the betrayals of the trade-union bureaucracy. Clearly the Trotskyist transitional program cannot be the programmatic basis for those endeavoring to become the water boys of the bureaucracy. That's why it was rarely even mentioned at Oberlin.

What perspectives can there be in the steelworkers union, for example, when the SWP actively supports the ongoing policies of Sadlowski in Chicago—the former head of a union district which lost thousands of jobs without a fight?

You are very bright, and undeniably sincere just as many of the SLer's best comrades are also bright and sincere. You are also, however, very isolated. Your political outlook is overwhelmingly *literary*. Please do not bank the world on a comparison of documents alone. If you choose to join the SL, you will be operating within a political framework that is extremely consistent and for that reason, very compelling. There is moreover a superficial similarity between Lenin's break from Kautskyism, or Liebknecht's break from the SPD and the SL's break from the "social-democratic" SWP (their identification with this period is contained within their name). But the similarity is fictitious and is itself an appeal to an archivist approach to politics rather than an objective appraisal of the balance of forces, using the *principles* of Trotskyism. The SL on most occasions does not think—they are afraid to think. They recite. Their consistency is scientific socialism is a belljar [sic]—a small box in which everything seems to work like a wonderful machine of words but which gets tossed around like a paper lantern when it ventures outside.

If you *join* the SL, at any rate, you will find it very hard to break from their routine. This is true of any organization. But keep in mind that habit (as Trotsky often pointed out) is often more convincing than the best arguments, the most convincing historical facts. I ask you in your reading to entertain the possibility that I am right, not simply to replace mentally Trotsky's references to opportunism with the SWP, or bolshevism with the SL. If you can temporarily suspend your fear that to side with the SWP on one or two points is capitulation to the bourgeoisie, I think you will read with new eyes. The world is a very big place, and it requires a constant reappraisal of old inviolable truths....

The SWP is filled with people who believe what we do—some are more talented and knowledgeable (many) and others less so. But we are all committed to socialist revolution... we give our lives to it. I urge you to drop this bad introduction to Marxism called the SL and join others in building the revolutionary party.

Good Luck,
Tim

What perspectives can there be in the miners union for an organization which supported the court-backed Miller and then continued in defense of him as recall petitions swept the coal fields. What perspectives can there be for class solidarity in an organization whose West Coast supporters sabotaged the widespread sentiment for sympathy strikes against the Taft-Hartley injunction during the coal strike? Class betrayals, not class struggle, is what the SWP has in store for the proletariat.

Last winter's miners strike should dispel all doubts that the SWP is in fact the sworn enemy of the proletariat's interests. According to these labor-fakers it would have been "disruptive" to dump Miller during the strike. Efforts to stop the movement of scab coal, the only way to bring the capitalists to their knees, were decried as "sectarian" and "pie-in-the-sky." After the strike had been broken, the SWP cynically paraded the give-away contract as a "victory."

On my last night at Oberlin, for no immediate cause, I was excluded from the final day's activities. This unceremonious expulsion was intended to "teach me a lesson." It had. It teaches me that the SWP is not serious about revolution, and in fact it is only a matter of time before the SWP drops its figleaf of Trotskyism. After a week in a summer camp of social democracy, make mine Spartacist. I join the ranks of the Spartacist tendency, the nucleus of the international vanguard party, confident of the future. Forward to the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

Comradely,
Don B.

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Charges Against Sandor John Dismissed

SYL Victory in Chicago "Outside Agitator" Trial

"Nine months after my arrest and after a dozen court appearances, numerous demonstrations and public meetings, and the expenditure of many hundreds of dollars, we have gotten what should have come at the beginning: the dismissal of the case against me.

"This decision represents a modest but very real victory in the fight to defend democratic rights. The administration of the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus has been prevented, at least for the time being, from keeping a socialist activist off the campus and from carrying through their intention of convicting me for the sole supposed 'crime' of helping make the revolutionary views of the Spartacus Youth League known on campus."

So ended the "outside agitator" prosecution of SYL activist Sandor John. On August 15 Circuit Court Judge John J. McDonnell formally dismissed the criminal trespass charges stemming from John's arrest at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle (UICC) campus on November 22. On a motion by John's attorney, David C. Thomas, McDonnell ruled that the First and Fourteenth Amendments protect the right of non-students to distribute literature in the main lobby of the campus Center, which he characterized as a "public forum." After innumerable delays, the judge's decision reflected what the SYL and the Partisan Defense Committee had been saying from the beginning: the university had no case—John's arrest was pure and simple harassment.

After the announcement of the judge's decision, John stated:

"This victory was made possible by the vigorous campaign carried out by the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League in collaboration with the Partisan Defense Committee. We did not rely on the phony justice of the capitalist courts but rather publicized the case widely and sought support from the left and labor movements and defenders of democratic rights through the initiation of an Ad Hoc Committee to Stop Administration Harassment. We do not forget for a minute that for every acquittal of left-wing activists there have been many convictions; that this system of American law and order carried through the brutal police murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in this city, and the legal murder of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs and many others."

This victory in the fight to defend democratic rights strikes an important blow at the vicious witchhunters of the Circle administration. These would-be Joe McCarthys had broadcast far and wide their intention to use the cops and the bourgeois courts to run "their" campus the way they wanted: without "outsider" reds stirring up "trouble" among the minority and working-class students under attack by the notorious and racist "Selection Index" admissions plan.

In a prominent story on the John case, the *Chicago Sun-Times* (16 August) quoted vice chancellor Richard Ward—a participant in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and an ex-New York City cop—as saying: "At stake is the question of our right to control our

premises and maintain order." Although Ward claims that UICC "will abide by the decision" of the court, the university has already announced its intention to fight the SYL's more far-reaching civil suit against UICC administration harassment.

Stop the Harassment at UICC!

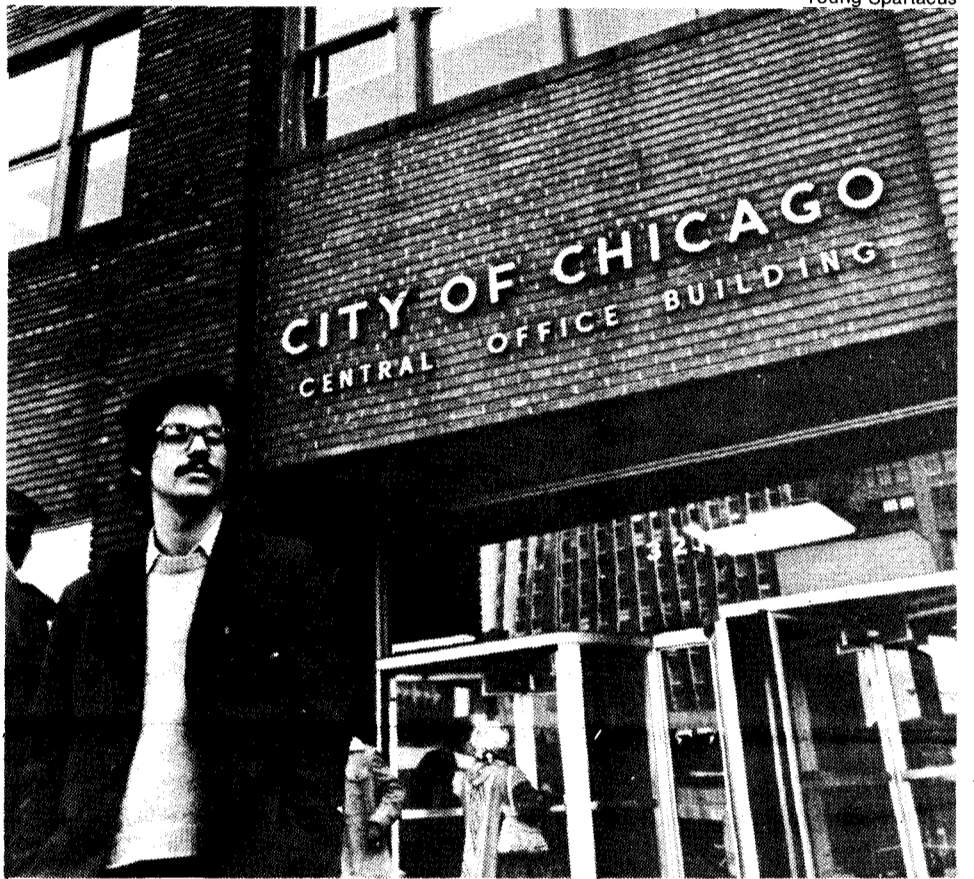
The victory in the Sandor John case should be used as a springboard to fight the university's vicious prosecution of a group of Palestinian and Latin students arrested at a May 11 anti-Zionist demonstration (again on criminal trespass charges) and its escalating threats against anti-Shah Iranians (see "UICC Admin. Does SAVAK Dirty Work," *Young Spartacus* No. 65, Summer 1978).

As John pointed out:

"It is important to note, while the Circle administration has been frustrated in its attempt to convict me for being what the McCarthyite witchhunters used to call an "outside agitator," that the same administration is now carrying out a vindictive prosecution of a group of Arab and other students, as well as vicious harassment of Iranian students—again because of their political activities and views. We demand that the charges against these students immediately be dropped!

"From the beginning of this case, when the Circle administration banned me from campus and then when they arrested me, we have emphasized that this attack on our organization is part of a broad assault by the Circle administration on democratic rights. Left-wing faculty members such as Julia LeSage are being run out; an ever-growing mountain of anti-democratic and absurd regulations is being piled on student organizations; and now attacks on foreign students have reached truly ominous proportions.

"The reason, in our opinion, why the administration struck out at the SYL is that we are the most active and vocal left-wing group on campus. We have become known as energetic fighters of the Selection Index and proponents of



Sandor John at court appearance, April 22.

labor/black defense to stop racist attacks against black schoolchildren on the Southwest side. We publicized the case of Bennie Lenard, a black auto worker beaten almost to death by the Melrose Park police. At the University of Chicago and around the country we became known as the organization that exposed and led protests against the aid given to the Chilean junta by Milton Friedman."

Haggling Through the Courts

The campaign to defend Sandor John combined legal defense with the mobilization of protest in the form of demon-

strations, meetings, and wide publicity. When John was first banned from Circle on October 27, the SYL initiated the Ad Hoc Committee Against Administration Harassment on the basis of the slogans: "Stop the Administration's Anti-Communist 'Ban' on Sandor John!" and "End Administration Harassment of the Left and Campus Organizations!" (After the arrest the Committee adopted the additional slogans "Defend Sandor John!" and "Drop the Charges!") The Committee was endorsed by Circle Student Govern-

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Victory to NYC Press Strike!

AUGUST 29—As *Young Spartacus* goes to press, New York City is embroiled in the most important newspaper strike in the U.S. since the *Washington Post* broke the Pressmen's Union in a bitter 1975-76 strike. The Printing Pressmen's Union struck the *New York Times*, *Post* and *Daily News* on August 9 after the publishers of the three major dailies posted new work rules designed to throw half their members out of work.

Since that time the papers have been shut down tight by an impressive show of union solidarity. Journalists and craft unionists in the Allied Printing Trades Council have honored the Pressmen's picket lines

from the beginning of the strike. Paper Handlers, Mechanics, Machinists, Electricians and the Newspaper Guild have also declared strikes against one or more of the papers and other unions are considering such a move.

What is at stake in this strike is the very existence of the printing trades unions in New York City. For years newspaper publishers have mounted a union-busting offensive throughout the country. In city after city, including Los Angeles, Miami and Portland, unions have been defeated and broken. The destruction of the Pressmen's Union at the *Washington Post* through organized scabbing is the model that the New York

City publishers, headed by notorious union-buster Rupert Murdoch, would like to emulate. But their plans have been frustrated by the determination of the Pressmen and their allies to defend their jobs and unions.

Wages, jobs and services in New York City have been drastically slashed through the successful anti-labor campaign of the bankers and their friends in the city government, a campaign abetted by sellout union misleaders like Victor Gotbaum and Albert Shanker. A labor victory in the newspaper strike could be the turning point in this vicious class war being waged against the workers of New York City. Victory to the Newspaper Strike!