



## Khomeini's troops gun down Kurds

# Down with the mullahs!

### Iranian left in life-and-death struggle

In the past month the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and his regime of clerical reaction has declared open war on the left and the oppressed national minorities -- inciting his mobs to carry out murderous anti-communist forays, unleashing his troops in genocidal slaughter against Kurdish nationalists, openly proclaiming a return to unbridled totalitarian rule. Directly under the Islamic gun, some militants are coming to see what we have warned from the start -- the mullah rulers are deadly enemies. For the first time since Khomeini came to power, the slogan "Death to this fascist government!" has become a battle-cry of the Iranian left which has tailed him all these months. Now they must break -- not just in the heat of battle, but in *political* opposition to Khomeini's rule. Their lives depend on it.

After months of intimidation, on 12 August more than 50,000 leftists and liberals fought off 5000 *Hesbollahis* (Islamic thugs from the "Party of God") wielding knives, clubs, iron bars, cleavers, chains and knuckle-dusters. The Khomeinists came with trucks full of bricks and rocks to try to rout the demonstration protesting against Khomeini's shutdown of the liberal daily newspaper *Ayandegan*. They had successfully broken up such protests several times before. But this time the leftists stood their ground. After the initial shock the marchers regrouped and counter-attacked. They broke the Khomeinists' charges chanting "Death to this fascist government!" The Fedayeen raised the slogan, "Islam will be defeated, Communism will be victorious!"

The following day, in the most direct and massive assault on the left to date, government-backed vigilantes sealed off central Teheran, searched for leftists, beat up "suspected communists" and attacked unveiled women. Screaming "Communism shall die, Islam shall win", hundreds of thousands of the Islamic reactionaries rampaged through the streets of Teheran. More than one thousand stormed the headquarters of the Guevarist Fedayeen guerrillas, in an attempt to seize their arms. The Fedayeen office was ransacked and seized, and the offices of the Socialist Workers Party of Iran (HKS) vandalised. The Muslim populist Mojahedeen positioned automatic rifles mounted atop armoured cars outside their headquarters as well as a human wall of their supporters. But within days they too were forced to surrender their headquarters.

In three days of mob terror between Sunday and Tuesday, more than 300 people were injured. Since then the offices of every major opposition party, bar the decrepit National Front of Karim Sanjabi, have been closed down, as have 44 newspapers and



The "Islamic revolution" in action: Khomeini's gunmen execute Kurdish nationalist fighters.

magazines, including the papers of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party and the Fedayeen. The nationalist Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) has been outlawed entirely.

### Khomeini: "crush the Kurds!"

This was to be only the beginning. Khomeini next turned his wrath on the rebellious Kurds, who have been demanding national autonomy. Decisively breaking the Kurdish resistance would set an example for the many other dissident national minorities; it would also eliminate a traditional haven for leftist opponents of the Persian regime. Denouncing the KDP as the "party of satan" and "traitors in the garb of democrats", Khomeini sent in US-built Cobra helicopter gunships and Phantom F-4 supersonic jets as well as a column of 100 tanks in a *jihad* (holy war) to re-establish military control over the Kurdish region. Despite the nationalist leaders' expressed willingness to negotiate, Khomeini has flatly refused to agree to a cease-fire. "Your purpose is not to negotiate with the criminals", he warned an envoy. "They must be crushed" (*Australian*, 30 August). Troops who hesitated were given stern warning that they would be "severely punished" by the "revolutionary courts".

In the first two weeks of fighting, more than 600 people were killed, largely Kurds, nearly seventy gunned down in cold blood by firing squads of Khomeini's "revolutionary guards". But historical opposition to Persian domination re-

mains firm, and even young boys and girls have been flocking to join the guerrilla fighters. The Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani has reportedly sent some 3000 guerrillas to assist the beleaguered Kurds and the KDP has vowed to fight until "the last drop of their blood has been shed" (*Australian*, 30 August), threatening retaliatory executions of captured "revolutionary guards".

At the same time the strategic southern Arab province of Khuzistan continues to seethe with unrest after the government's May assault on Arab nationalists in the port city of Khorramshahr, today flooded with Persian militiamen. In Abadan, Khomeinist troops fired on a mass Arab protest demonstration, while alleged Arab nationalist saboteurs of the province's all-important oil refineries and pipelines have been summarily executed in a massive terror campaign. Crude oil production, which was six billion barrels a day under the shah's regime and was to have been stabilised at a level of 4 billion barrels by the mullahs, is now at under one billion -- the product not only of the violence but of "labour unrest". To get the crucial flow of oil restored, the Islamic regime has granted the oil workers a wage increase from \$3 to \$8 a day. But with the carrot came the stick: Khuzistan's ruthless overlord, Admiral Mahdani, told *Le Monde* (24 July) he had arrested 300 Arab militants and already executed 40 "ringleaders".

If Khomeini's bloodthirsty onslaught against the Kurds has torn to shreds any illusions of Islamic "democracy" for the oppressed nationalities, it has also put paid to the pretence of "anti-imperialism" which the reformist left chose to see in his anti-American rhetoric. With the army in disarray and his "revolutionary guards" woefully ill-trained, Khomeini has begun negotiating with the US for delivery of part of the \$5 billion arms order made by the shah and can-



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## Iran ...

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celled by Khomeini when he took power. One US official's "denial" of a "decision to arm Iran against the Kurds" (*Newsweek*, 3 September) was as sure a sign as any of US imperialism's readiness for a rapprochement with Khomeini over the corpses of the Kurdish nationalists. As *Newsweek* put it: "Despite early fears that Iran would espouse an anti-American line, Khomeini's foreign policy has not been particularly adventurist -- and he has maintained the Shah's anti-Soviet position."

### For the right of self-determination!

Khomeini's helicopter gunships and tanks have made the national question a practical military question. The savage fighting is a key test of

## Criminal USec revisionism paves the way HKS militants face firing squad

Latest reports indicate that 14 members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) have been tried by Khomeini's "revolutionary courts" in the Arab regional centre of Ahwaz on the spurious charge of "defending foreign agents" (ie supporting Arab demands for "autonomy"). Twelve have been sentenced to death, and two women, tried separately (!), face life imprisonment. These militants must not be allowed to join the hundreds of leftists, women, homosexuals and national minorities who have already met a brutal death at the hands of the murderous Islamic regime.

Today, with its Iranian comrades facing death at his hands, the British United Secretariat (USec) group's Socialist Challenge (30 August) proclaims that "Khomeini has become the new shah". But the mullahs are only carrying out the program on which they came to power: "Death to communists! Death or the veil!" Following the assassination of Spanish centrist Andres Nin, Trotsky said: "Whoever invokes the ignominy of the bourgeoisie and its lackeys, instead of analyzing the bankrupt policy of the revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary organizations, is a criminal" (The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)). Nin supported the Popular Front; the criminal revisionists of the USec/HKS supported open Islamic reaction!

They did all they could to help boost this "new shah" into power! It was the USec/HKS who hailed Khomeini as an "anti-imperialist" and "progressive", who dismissed his cry for a return to medieval Koranic "justice" as imperialist lies, who trumpeted the veil as a "symbol of protest", who capitulated to Persian chauvinism by repudiating the right to national separation of the oppressed minorities, who helped lull the Iranian working masses into thinking that a victory for the mullahs was a victory for the oppressed masses.

Even after the arrest of the HKS members, USec leader Ernest Mandel dismissed the danger of Islamic white terror: "So, some of our comrades are in jail -- but our organization is legal.... So what you have is a step from a reactionary dictatorship (under the shah) which was bourgeois towards what you could call partial bourgeois democracy" (quoted in *Workers Vanguard* no 237, 3 August). The USec's "partial bourgeois democracy" means genocidal slaughter for the Kurds and cold-blooded execution for its own comrades. The USec revisionist line leads to the death of socialists and national minorities in Iran! They are besmirched with the blood of the fallen Kurds, as they will be with the blood of their own comrades if the hands of the mullah butchers are not stayed. Stop the executions! Military victory to the Kurds! Release the endangered HKS militants and all class war prisoners!

## Australasian SPARTACIST



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the mullahs' ability to consolidate their rule -- and a key test for ostensible Leninists. While relentlessly exposing the nationalist illusions of the minorities, revolutionaries must give unconditional military support to the Arabs and Kurds fighting the armies of Persian domination. It is precisely now, when Khomeini issues fiery interdictions from Qom against "separatists" that Trotskyists must forthrightly demand that the minorities have the right of self-determination -- full freedom to separate, and nothing less -- seeking to unite the entire Iranian proletariat against Khomeini and all the mullahs, landlords and capitalists. But it is just now that the ostensibly Trotskyist HKS buries this demand, capitulating to Khomeini under the nationalist "autonomy" slogans of the traditional feudal leaders of the oppressed nationalities (see *ASP* no 65, July 1979).

Two years ago, the Sattar League (the US SWP-loyal component of the merger which formed the HKS earlier this year) explained that "unconditional support of the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities -- including their right to national independence -- is the proletariat's duty" (*SWP International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, July 1977; emphasis added). But now, when Khomeini threatens "separatists" with brutal reprisal, the HKS complains only that "separatism" is simply a "charge made to justify oppression of Arabs" (*Intercontinental Press*, 11 June). So then presumably the HKS accepts the premise that suppression of a genuine separatist movement would be justified. The left-Stalinist Fedayeen, who echo Khomeini despite their support to "autonomy" for the nationalities, call "separatism" an imperialist plot against the "Iranian Revolution" -- differing from the HKS only in being more explicit. Even as the Kurds are mowed down by Islamic gunmen,

these "revolutionaries" offer a cowardly left cover for Persian chauvinism.

At no time since the mullahs came to power have the left and Khomeini's forces stood so poised for final conflict. This could be the beginning of the end for the left, or it could be the beginning of an understanding leading to a militant and effective defence. But they must reverse their fatal course of "critical support" to the Islamic Republic and repudiate their faith in the so-called "anti-imperialist" Bazargan, who stands with Khomeini in his desire to build an effective Islamic army to crush the left and national minorities.

Only two weeks after the mock elections which gave his hand-picked slate of clerics a majority in the new 75-seat assembly, Khomeini openly pledged himself to the butcher shah's brand of totalitarianism: "We will keep just one party or a couple of good ones [!] and the rest will be banned. We want to make it like the Rastakhiz [the only legal party under the shah]" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August). Threatening to throw all leftists "into the dustbin of death", Khomeini railed against the left and the struggling national minorities: "If we had set up scaffolds in public squares and strung up these devils at the beginning of the revolution, we would have had none of these troubles" (*Time*, 3 September). That he did not attempt to "string up the Marxist devils" right from the start was not the product of some illusory "anti-imperialist unity" or the mullahs' respect for parliamentary niceties, but rather because of the temporary disarray of the state apparatus following the shah's overthrow.

It was the duty of all proletarian tendencies

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# letter

New York  
1 August 1979

Dear Comrades,

In correctly attacking the Socialist Workers Party [SWP] for its wretched refusal to defend the guerrillaist Fedayeen, the article "Save jailed Iranian leftists!" in *ASP* no 65 (July 1979) implies a qualitative programmatic distinction between the Fedayeen and Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) where none exists. One paragraph says that the SWP "refused to admit":

"that the Fedayeen were more immediately under the gun of Islamic reaction because they stood -- albeit empirically -- to the left of the 'Trotskyist' HKS. In the absence of a communist pole of attraction to win subjectively revolutionary elements of the Fedayeen over to the Trotskyist program of workers revolution, these valiant militants politically tailed the reactionary mullahs no less than the HKS did. But it was the Fedayeen who organised defence guards for the women's anti-veil protest, who called for a boycott of Khomeini's absurdly undemocratic referendum, and who, unlike the HKS, defended the rights of the national minorities not simply through leaflets but gun-in-hand."

As the paragraph points out, the Fedayeen "tailed the reactionary mullahs no less than the HKS did". By placing them "to the left" of the HKS, it confuses the essential distinction between subjectively revolutionary impulses and actual program, in particular implying that the Fedayeen are more left-wing by virtue of their petty-bourgeois guerrillaism. But as we have often said, "picking up the gun" does not make anyone automatically anything. Program is decisive.

Armed struggle is no substitute for the proletariat mobilised independently as a class, and the guerrillaism of the Fedayeen meshes with their class-collaborationist rejection of that perspective. The HKS is programmatically rotten not because it fails to pick up the gun but because it shares with the Fedayeen this rejection, albeit differently expressed. The Fedayeen's Guevarism does not have a proletarian class character; rather, it represents a petty-bourgeois layer and orientation. In fact, this armed populism is fundamentally counterposed to the struggle of the proletariat for power. Besides, whether a Trotskyist nucleus in Iran could intervene militarily in defence of the national minorities is a question of tactics and possibilities. There are better ways to make the point about the legalism of the SWP than to simply contrast leaflets to joining the Turkoman and Kurdish nationalists "gun-in-hand".

It was the Fedayeen who wanted to be allowed to "participate" in the regime which emerged from Khomeini's victory, who looked to Bazargan to

form a "democratic" government in line with the Fedayeen's Stalinist, stagist conception, and who complained that Khomeini had been cut off from the people. In fact on paper, the program of the HKS is in some respects to the left of the Fedayeen.

Though the Fedayeen did militarily defend the rebelling Kurds against Khomeini's forces, they also subordinated themselves to the traditional feudal Kurdish leaders (as noted in "Kurds Revolt", *Workers Vanguard* no 228, 30 March). This is certainly no different in principle from the HKS' tailing of moderate Arab nationalists in Khuzistan pointed out in another article in the same issue of *ASP*.

The Fedayeen's defence of the anti-veil protesters was laudable and courageous, but what is needed is a working-class-based, united-front defence of all the left, working-class and democratic-secular forces; on this to my knowledge the Fedayeen have defaulted no less than the HKS.

It is true, and worth pointing out, that the Fedayeen called for a boycott of the phoney referendum and the HKS did not, and that the Fedayeen's position on this issue aroused the Khomeini regime against them. But a general statement that one group ("albeit empirically") is to the left of the other implies more than an episodic divergence; particularly since it would have been entirely consistent for any bourgeois democrat to take the Fedayeen's position on Khomeini's plebiscite. Although the HKS' capitulation on this question was truly wretched, again it does not draw any qualitative programmatic line between the two groups.

One can certainly conclude that the Fedayeen contain many subjectively revolutionary elements, perhaps many more potential revolutionary (ie Trotskyist) cadres than the HKS, whose clinging to reformist legalism is especially blind in an Iran where even music is banned. It is indeed all the more criminal for the SWP to play down or ignore the repression directed against the Fedayeen. But we should not therefore be led to portray the program of the Fedayeen as an improvement on that of the HKS; to the contrary, we must underline the contradiction between the evident courage and seriousness of these militants and the program they are attached to, which is no better than that of the HKS.

Communist greetings,

DR

*ASP* replies: DR's point is well taken. That the Fedayeen's militancy represents no programmatic alternative to the legalism of the HKS for mobilising the Iranian working masses against Islamic reaction is being confirmed forcefully and tragically at this very moment. ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST



# Young quits, economy in shambles Carter down ... and out?

For those who thought Jimmy Carter's firing of half his cabinet, touching off a governmental crisis, was a "self-inflicted wound", the conclusion seemed inescapable: "Some sort of mental problem", said Senator Ted Stevens on the Senate floor. "We are wondering if he is having some sort of a breakdown" (*New York Times*, 21 July). So it was Rosalynn to the rescue of the president's failing popularity and suspect rationality, giving the press a vigorous defense of her husband's mental health. But, what little the "First Lady" could do to bail out the Carter ship was effectively torpedoed four weeks later, when Carter's black front man at the United Nations, Andrew Young, "resigned" amid charges of lying and subverting US-Israeli relations.

Indeed, there was good cause for wondering about Carter's episode of apparent political irrationality beginning with his canceled press conference July 5. Everything he had done made things worse. And the economy was already in deep trouble when he began: mass layoffs sending tens of thousands of auto workers to the unemployment lines; inflation at a 28-year high and going up; the dollar sinking fast in the international money market; the public still fuming over monster gas lines on both coasts and worried about future gas and heating oil shortages. With all this mounting anxiety about the economy and anger over the Big Oil rip-off, instead of downplaying the crisis Carter has cast it in broad historical terms, focusing on his "leadership" and on the "future of the nation" and its "system of free enterprise". Thus, he treated the sharp conjunctural crisis in the economy as a global political issue and test for US capitalism.

For villains he chose, as expected, OPEC and "Washington". But in his Sunday Night Sermon on July 15, in a move of supreme assurance and stupidity, he blamed the American people. Calling for a renewed faith in god and country, Carter railed against the idolatrous Americans who "worship self-indulgence and consumption". He demanded austerity and sacrifice because it would help Americans repent for their sins. "Owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning", he preached as the GNP [Gross National Product] took a big dip and consumer spending ebbed as real income fell. "We have learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose." And he quoted approvingly one of the talking smile buttons who came to visit him in his Camp David Wilderness: "We've got to stop crying and start sweating; stop talking and start walking; stop cursing and start praying." What desperate arrogance of power he displays in this "let 'em walk, let 'em pray" hucksterism that imitates the political message of Marie Antoinette in the style of fundamentalist con man, Oral Roberts.

Let Carter sell it to the laid-off auto workers at Dodge Main. Let him try to tell them the layoffs are the result of their own "self-indulgence", a matter of loss of faith. Let him tell the American motorist to walk along the highways which cost billions of dollars, that

knit together the patchwork demography of an America designed to suit Big Oil, auto industrialists and capitalist politicians. Let him go to the gas lines in his jet plane and helicopter to tell Americans that they are "guzzlers" and that the oil cartel needs government subsidies. Let him tell those who will freeze this winter for lack of fuel or the money to pay for it they should pray for heat.

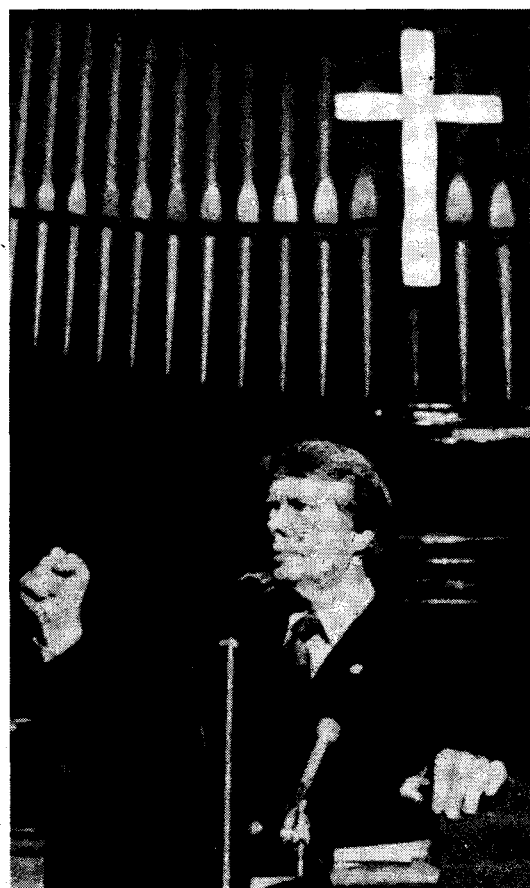
Few American working people follow statistics on world oil production, refinery runs, stockpiling, etc, but there was, nevertheless, a widespread certainty that it was the blackmailing oil companies, not the Arab sheiks, who were the principal villains. Triggered by the manipulated gas shortage cooked up by Big Oil with the connivance of Jimmy Carter, auto sales have plummeted, inventories are at record levels and the introduction of 1980 models has been delayed. More than 12,000 General Motors workers recently laid off in plants stretching from Flint, Michigan to Los Angeles joined another 12,000 Ford workers and almost 20,000 Chrysler workers already out on the streets as a result of plant and shift closings. Detroit's Dodge Main, the largest assembly plant in the country, is about to be shut down for good; Detroit is going down the tubes. The only effective means of combating these mass layoffs is for the United Auto Workers (UAW) to revive the historic weapon with which the union was first built, the sit-down strike.

## Carter - a victory for mediocrity

There is a crisis of confidence in America. But Americans are not bamboozled into believing they have lost confidence in themselves. They have no confidence that Big Oil will do anything but rip them off. They have no confidence that the government can do anything to stop wild inflation or deepening recession. And most of all they have no confidence in Jimmy Carter.

Thus, the explanation for Carter's theatrics (aside from psychological ones) is that he hopes to run for re-election against the most unpopular politician in America -- Jimmy Carter. But in politicizing the economy he has made it a political issue and personalized it in his presidency. In a desperate attempt to get "born again" to office in 1980, Carter risks a "revival" not of a religious sort, but a revival of *political opposition* to the present economic hardship. Instead of stability at the top he projected an image of a government in crisis, and the dollar plunged to a new low on the international money market. Instead of providing the capitalists with an administration that could lash out against the American working people with the strength and flexibility of whipcord, Carter served up Georgia peanut brittle.

It is the brittleness and isolation of the Carter government -- as well as his fond desire to run against his own record in office for two-and-a-half years -- that resulted in the demand for the resignations of all the senior officers and the purge of half the cabinet in 24 hours. To paraphrase Russell Baker, it left the administration with a bunch of Georgians and a pollster.



Carter's message: "Let 'em pray!"

Some capitalist politicians who sympathized with the ousted cabinet members called it "a victory for mediocrity" while a Texas Democrat exclaimed, "Good grief! They're cutting down the biggest trees and keeping the monkeys" (*New York Times*, 22 July). But in fact there was no difference between the political flora and fauna of the ins and outs. Not since Richard Nixon put HR Haldeman and a string of second-rate PR men and account executives in charge of the government has a more in-grown and dim-witted crew occupied the White House. But like Nixon, Carter has no one else he can truly trust.

The capo of the Georgia "mafia" now in command is 34-year-old Hamilton Jordan, who demands his name be pronounced "Jerdin", and whom Speaker of the House "Tip" O'Neill insisted upon calling "Hannibal Jerkin". This newly designated chief of staff is the same "Jerkin" about whom the White House felt obliged to release a 33-page document denying he spit Amaretto and cream down the blouse of a woman in a bar. Such antics are little appreciated among the born-again pure, but he is "loyal".

Young, the latest casualty in the Carter purge, has long been an embarrassment to the administration. The last straw came when he held a secret meeting with the PLO's observer at the UN and followed that up by, in his words, failing to tell "the whole truth" when word of the meeting became public. Israel and the Zionist lobby in the US were outraged at this apparent violation of a long-standing ban on discussion with the PLO. "The thing that's worst about this whole thing is that he lied to his own government" moaned one White House official disingenuously ... a day before the State Department admitted that its ambassador to Austria had met with a PLO official *three times this year*. Andy "The Lip" Young claimed to be "unbloodied and unbowed", but as one black Democrat put it, "Carter has sealed the coffin shut on the black vote -- his only hope for re-election".

## Not Carter, not Kennedy! Build a workers party!

For all Carter's talk about "listening to America", the recent purge of "disloyal" elements is a further demonstration of the isolated character of this regime. Behind the obvious brittleness is Carter's grand confidence game. But this con-game cannot have players who may turn out to be nay-sayers, whistle-blowers and general skeptics. It is the business of faith healing to have a lot of skills. And when the crippled are told to "arise for god", when the hallelujahs are sounded, they better get up and walk.

It is against this background of fear of criticism that Carter's Secret Service agents came onto the floor of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) convention in Detroit July 16 and criminally seized militant union official Jane Margolis, an elected delegate to the convention. She was going to say to her brothers and sisters that this man should not be allowed to use the CWA convention as a platform for his strikebreaking policies. For her intention to make this simple statement of working-class sense and solidarity, she received brutal treatment from Carter's goons. Trampling over the rights of the union and its elected delegates, the Carter "team" cleared the way for its boss to try to act like a "friend of labor". They were not going to



Workers Vanguard

Angry Detroit auto workers protest at Chrysler headquarters against mass layoffs, 26 July.

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# Gay-left activist breaks to Trotskyism

## Autonomy is not an option

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We reprint below a statement by Comrade Jeff McCarthy which was distributed at the Fifth National Homosexual Conference, held in Melbourne the weekend of 31 August. A longtime activist in the gay-left milieu who last month joined the Spartacist League, Comrade McCarthy has not surprisingly earned the hostility of many of his former colleagues, who see in his adherence to the principled Leninism of the SL a "betrayal" of their class-collaborationist "autonomous movement" pressure politics. Following the distribution of the statement on the first morning of the conference, arch-feminist Gaby Antolovich, one-time women's officer of AUS, physically attacked McCarthy, ripped leaflets out of his hand and overturned the SL literature table. When the SL presented a motion to the "left caucus" condemning this attack as anti-communist and a violation of workers democracy, even these reformist "leftists" -- who considered Antolovich's anti-communist frenzy as "understandable" -- felt compelled to recognise it as an attack on workers democracy. A number also felt compelled, however, to express their outrage that the SL was even there at all -- after all, our comrades would not openly "declare" if they were homosexuals. Unlike these congenial sectoralists, we consider program as primary. We declare ourselves as communists, fighters for the revolutionary proletarian program, and we welcome Comrade McCarthy into our ranks.

For more than six years I have been an activist in the socialist and gay-rights movements. Three of those I spent in and around the Communist Party (CPA) and another two around the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Time and again I have seen groups and individual militants in the left/gay milieu stagnate and burn out. Rejecting the primacy of the proletariat in the struggle against all forms of social oppression, they remained trapped within the narrow confines of the social-democratic "family of the left", their only strategy for social change one of pressuring "sympathetic" politicians and union bureaucrats.

Like many, I was irrevocably hostile to the Spartacist League (SL), the pariah "sect" who dared challenge the assumption that each sector of the oppressed must alone lead the fight against their specific oppression. I saw my task as building a "revolutionary leadership" for the "autonomous gay movement". I have now come to the conclusion that it is the very perspective of "autonomy" which not only precluded a revolutionary leadership, but prevented my seeing the struggle for gay liberation in a revolutionary perspective.

The 1973 split by the "radicalesbians"/"radical effeminists" from the Gay Liberation

Front impelled me toward the introspective self-flagellation of "consciousness-raising". Only after that personal "struggle" ended in defeat was I forced to recognise that the nuclear family was not only an instrument for sexual repression as a mechanism for social control, but that it was an integral economic unit of capitalism; that it would take the smashing of capitalism to replace it and remove the very basis for homosexual oppression. In a negative way it taught me that revolutionary struggle is a struggle for social and political power!

### 1975 political crisis: CPA, SWP tail ALP

That the CPA could allow me to head off on this self-destructive trajectory while a member says enough about their view of communist politics. What finally broke me from the CPA was the 1975 political crisis. The Whitlam/Hawke capitulators were clearly on the side of the bourgeoisie, would offer themselves up as sacrificial lambs on the altar of parliamentary "democracy" to prevent the independent mobilisation of the workers in their own interests. The Communist Party clearly could have thrown substantial sections of the workforce into the struggle directly. Instead they uncritically joined the chorus of ALP parliamentarism. The SWP's futile wish for a "socialist" ALP government didn't impress me either. But their "left" posing and their stated desire to build a vanguard party blurred their essential similarity to the CPA.

For the next 3 or 4 years I was to move from one episodic activity to another in the SWP/CPA/"independent movement" orbit. Each political fight and each struggle seemed to me to either lack a sense of direction or lack a strategy for winning, or both. Each lesson learned from defeat remained partial and unconsolidated, forgotten by the next defeat.

I would now reject the merely personal strategy of "coming out" but remain locked in what was essentially the "left wing" of the separatist gay movement (ie Socialist Homosexuals). I would now reject separatism but stay within the framework of broader "autonomous movement" propaganda blocs, like the ANTI-FOL (Anti-Festival of Light) and CAR (Coalition Against Repression). I would become dissatisfied with these purely "educative" perspectives only to take up active apolitical defence work in the Sydney ghetto and end up full circle trying to build a "radical" gay-liberation action group, the Gay Solidarity Group (GSG).

I refused to pursue the logic of my dissatisfaction, which would have called into question the very framework of fighting any oppression outside the class struggle and led to the rejection of the lifestyle-radicalism which saw "coming out" as an "objective" threat to the repressive ideology of capitalism. I refused, because the logic of that led straight to that "tiny bunch of anti-homosexual crazies", the Spartacist League.

What choices lay before me? Remain an independent activist? That would lead me straight out of politics. The CPA was out of the running. The SWP tailed the very separatism that I was trying to reject. Pandering to the illusions of "gay power", the best the SWP could offer was that the "gay community" could be "radicalised" through apolitical "mass actions" like the Mardi Gras. They later went on to dump the "gay movement" and in the process embrace the most backward bourgeois moralism. In an article in their American paper, the *Militant* (13 April), they dismiss a stand against the age-of-consent ("moral danger"/"carnal knowledge") laws as a "reactionary demand" whose "advocates are primarily adult men who believe they should be unrestricted in having sex with children". Just as before they had accepted backward illusions in the gay milieu to be where the action was, they now pander to the anti-homosexual prejudices of the trade-union bureaucracy.

### IS capitulates to anti-Sovietism

I never considered joining the International Socialists (IS) seriously. They buckle before anti-communist hysteria by refusing to defend the historical gains still embodied in the Soviet economy despite the parasitic bureaucracy. In doing so they fail to understand the central division in the workers movement since 1917. The repression of homosexuals in the Soviet Union, Cuba and the other deformed workers states is a reflection of the rule of counterrevolutionary

Stalinist bureaucratic castes; it is one more indication of the necessity for workers political revolution.

Clarity on this question is essential not only for socialists who want to have any hope of combating anti-communism in the gay milieu, but for anybody who aspires to make a socialist revolution. But despite ostensible deep-going differences, the CPA, SWP and IS never raised their disagreements on the Russian question -- or anything else. These many-movements-plus-a-party "Leninists", in pandering to the conception that every sector of the oppressed must lead its own struggle -- sectoralism -- and the notion of the party as an amalgam of special interest groups, liquidated the historical lesson that the unitary vanguard party of the working class is the only



Sydney, 26 July 1978: protest against Wran's arrests.

solution to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

The police attacks on the Mardi Gras in Sydney in 1978 led to an upsurge of activity around homosexual rights. The necessity of defending the arrested people attracted many new faces, re-activated many old militants and brought active intervention from the whole spectrum of left organisations who supported gay rights. The urgency of building an effective defence was clearly posed. The Spartacist League offered a perspective of a non-exclusionist, united-front defence campaign aimed at mobilising the labour movement around the demands: "Drop the charges! Full democratic rights for homosexuals!" This represented a clear threat to our perspective of using the arrests to "build the gay movement".

### GSG "autonomy": pressure Wran

In order to maintain political control over the campaign, the "Sperts" had to be gotten rid of. There were three possible strategies. Explicit exclusion, put forward by Gary Nicholls and the Sydney University Communist Group (basically CPA), would have paved the way for further anti-communist splits. Excluding all straights would have divided us from nearly half the activists in the campaign. The third strategy, motivated by me, was to take over the independent defence committee and incorporate it into GSG -- a move which would politically exclude the SL. By this time the GSG had become a "gay rights" group pushing for, among other things, a "charter of rights" from the government who'd just busted their heads. My strategy won out, and worked.

The GSG became little more than a pressure group with a perspective of pressuring or coaxing the Wran government into lending its protection to the "gay ghetto" -- the same government that had launched the vicious police assault! Wran's attorney-general, Frank Walker, was invited to the Fourth National Homosexual Conference (from

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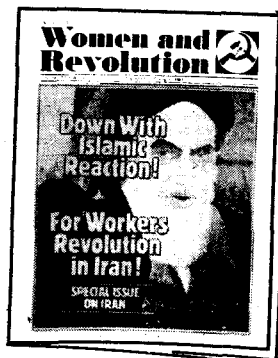
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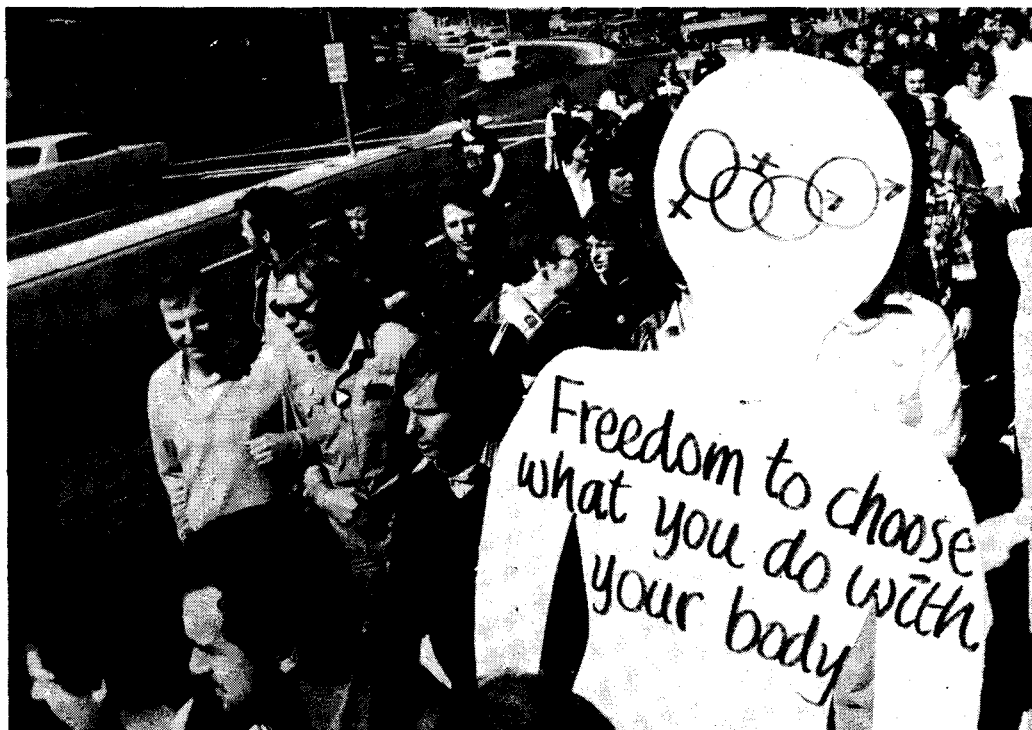
which the SL, which was defending the gay rights Walker was attacking, was excluded). How far the GSG was willing to go to appease Wran became obvious to me after a GSG delegation that had been to see him reported that in response to Wran's false accusation that the SL was responsible for "violence", they had told him that they had nothing to do with the SL. Whatever else they might have said, this was a statement to Wran that, so far as GSG was concerned he could have the SL, a green light for state repression against the SL.

The ongoing stagnation of GSG was masked with 101 petty excuses: lack of premises, lack of organisation, lack of commitment, lack of money, "adventurist" tactics by a handful of anarchists. Never was there an attempt to analyse anything more than the best way to go about getting some support in the "ghetto" -- because that was enough to satisfy the competing reformist organisations, primarily the SWP, who formed the backbone of GSG. For all its rhetoric about "international gay solidarity", after the mobilisation around opposition to the Briggs campaign taking place in America, the GSG's "internationalism" seemed to shrink into a parochialism that didn't see past Oxford Street. When it came time to defend homosexuals in Iran against wholesale massacre, GSG wouldn't even muster a token show of solidarity. How could they, without embarrassing the SWP ... who were busy trying not to embarrass the mullahs.

#### Scabbing and the class line

It was only after the strike by SRC office workers at Sydney University, however, that I came to see that a decisive line of principle divided all these opportunists from the SL. This strike was scabbed on by the SRC president and the leading light in the Sydney University Communist Group, Gary Nicholls. It was done in the name of "student unionism" as a higher principle than the picket line. Not one of the leftists or feminists or gay-rights activists I knew in the "Broad Left" coalition for control of the SRC distanced themselves from this act of sabotage of the most basic class principle. Not only that but they all covered up, to avoid a scandal so close to the elections for their precious SRC. After the scabbing had been exposed by the SL most of them, including the SWP, defended it and complained that the SL was using it to gain credibility. All that I could reply was that I was ashamed that the Spartacists were the only people on the campus I could talk to.

A pattern emerged. The SL was the only group to fight for a class-struggle, united-front defence of the arrested gay-rights marchers and for this they were excluded in order to protect the "autonomy" of the "movement". But even those, like Nicholls, who called for dropping the defence campaign were welcome. The SL alone fought for defence of a basic principle of the class struggle, everybody else was prepared to forget



27 August 1978 gay-rights march in Sydney: "gay power" politics powerless in face of right-wing bourgeois offensive on democratic rights.

Geoff Friend

it. Despite doubts about their program and their "sectarian" (polemical) approach which took months more of political struggle to resolve, I began to see the SL as at least consistent and principled.

At a 16 September GSG public meeting I had said that, "We have to break out of our parochial ghetto and forge links with other movements of social protest, especially the trade unions". It was not until I came around to the Leninist program of the SL that I finally made the political "break out of the parochial ghetto". What is needed in the unions is not "gay caucuses" to pressure the union bureaucrats to defend victimised gays, but *class-struggle* opposition caucuses to replace the bureaucrats with a program to defend the class as a whole and all the oppressed against attacks and to lead the workers to power.

#### Red Flag Union fusion -- a powerful vindication

I received a powerful vindication of my break from gay-lifestyle radicalism to Trotskyism when I came into possession of the documents of the Lavender & Red Union/Red Flag Union (RFU), a "gay liberation-communist" formation in the American homosexual movement which went on to fuse with the Spartacist League/US. The RFU had a long and well-known history in the gay milieu; their fusion with the Spartacist League was unique in the history of the communist movement. As soon as the RFU came around the SL, gay-lifestyle radicals here stopped referring to it. Unlike all the other left groups which attempted to win them, only the SL/US fought the RFU's sectoralist

illusions and fought to win them over on the entire communist program.

"The program of the revolutionary party must express the *objective* historical interests and tasks of the international proletariat. There is only one communist program. Thus, the purpose of Trotsky's Transitional Program is to mobilize the entire working class -- to bridge the gap between felt needs and objective tasks, between consciousness of oppression and the need to take state power under the leadership of the proletarian vanguard.

"There is no special revolutionary program for homosexuals. The communist program includes demands which address the special oppression of homosexuals. But unlike sectoralists, revolutionaries understand that the fate of homosexuals -- like that of any other oppressed group -- is determined by the course of the class struggle.

"Revolutionary Marxists approach the question of homosexual oppression as the only consistent defenders of democratic rights for all the exploited and oppressed. These rights are indivisible and can be secured only with the proletariat in power." (*Red Flag* fusion supplement, *Workers Vanguard* no 172, 9 September 1977)

Autonomy is not an option. There is only one road in the struggle against oppression. There is only one place for communist homosexuals -- in the struggle for a revolutionary party -- in the Spartacist League. ■

## Mullah lovers in a bind SWP turns to thuggery

On 17 August the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) held a "public" forum at the Sydney Trade Union Club entitled "How to stop Fraser -- a fighting strategy for labour". The cravenly reformist SWP has no fighting strategy for labour, but its behaviour that evening demonstrated its criminal readiness to physically suppress Trotskyist criticism. No sooner had two trade-union supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) got off the lift than a squad of SWP goons ordered them to leave the floor -- and the building. When the SL supporters protested against this blatant violation of workers democracy, leading SWP'er Jamie Doughney shoved them into the lift, where they were surrounded by four other SWP heavies, including national committee members, Nita Keig and John Garcia. Even in the lift Doughney continued jostling and shoving one of the trade unionists. Three days later, at an AMWSU-sponsored forum on Eurocommunism, Garcia responded to a remark about the SWP's sale of Fidel Castro's public-relations journal, *Granma*, on its literature table by again pushing one of these SL supporters.

Three years ago, following a brutal attack against supporters of the SWP and SL by the crazed Healyite Socialist Labour League outside the Sydney Trades Hall, the SWP and SL issued a joint statement "in favor of the free exchange of differing views within the labor movement without fear of physical reprisal from anyone. Taking such a stand certainly does not mean repudiating the right of self-defence against violent attacks". The SWP, intoxicated with its recent "turn" to the trade-union bureaucracy, would do well to recall that this statement was endorsed by a wide range of trade unionists. We, for our part, continue to stand by *both* points in that

statement. *Workers democracy will be defended!*

If the SWP's pushing and shoving is different in degree from outright thug attacks, it is no different in intent: to draw a blood line between its membership and the SL's revolutionary Trotskyism. In response to the SL's demand for an apology and a repudiation of these standover tactics, Doughney instead boasted: "I started the pushing, if you want to know the facts".

These are not isolated incidents by unstable individuals -- though it may well be that months of apologising for the "progressive" mullahs who are currently threatening the SWP's own comrades in Iran with the "dustbin of death" has begun to take its toll on even such normally stolid reformists as Doughney. At an 11 June picket in Sydney called by the SWP to defend its imprisoned Iranian comrades, the SWP leadership even ordered its members to abandon the picket rather than risk association with our Trotskyist opposition to the reactionary regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini and his fellow "holy men". For months the SWP has attempted to shield its supporters from our Trotskyist politics through a policy of explicit political exclusion of all SL members and supporters -- and even individuals known to express pro-SL views -- from all its "public" forums.

To cover for its cowardly exclusionism the SWP has raised a smokescreen of absurd charges of SL "disruption". In an 8 August telephone conversation to determine if the SWP would maintain its exclusionist policy even at the Trade Union Club, an SL member challenged SWP youth leader Tony Forward to cite instances of SL disruption. He could not. Instead he finally admitted, "That's right, it's political. It's nothing related to



Sydney, 17 October 1976: Healyite thugs attack SL, SWP.

who the fuck you are. It's just a question of politics".

That's right, it's just a question of politics. The SWP's support to the mullahs, its uncritical enthusing over the Stalinist Castro regime in Cuba, its Third Camp analysis of Pol Pot's Cambodia as capitalist, its support for reactionary age-of-consent legislation in the US, its apology for last month's betrayal of the Redfern postal workers -- no wonder SWP forums are so pitifully attended. And no wonder the SWP leadership fears any contact between its supporters and our consistent, principled Leninist opposition to Islamic reaction, imperialist "human rights" anti-Sovietism and such false strategies as feminism, nationalism and trade-union reformism. But it will be no more successful at intimidating us than it has been at countering our revolutionary Trotskyist alternative to its bankrupt reformism. ■

## Carter...

Continued from page three

stand for a voice raised in principled working-class opposition.

But the unfortunate fact is that Carter's government crisis is not prompted by proletarian class opposition. As in Nixon's Watergate crisis, the bourgeoisie is again cursed with a weak and isolated government but blessed with a wretched class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy. The labor fakery understand their job is to prevent a governmental crisis from becoming a full-scale social and political crisis. As with Watergate they are prepared again to help the bourgeois parties ride out their present troubles without significant loss of support. In this regard their main task is to keep working-class discontent within the bounds of the capitalist parties, particularly the Democrats. Fed up with Carter? Well then, they ask increasingly disaffected ranks, how about Kennedy?

The labor tops, with the exception of former UAW head and present US ambassador to China Leonard Woodcock and Glen Watts of the CWA, have been less than enthusiastic about Carter, who has consistently gone out of his way to insult labor. The overwhelming choice of the labor bureaucrats in 1976 was Cold Warrior Hubert Humphrey. Now they would certainly prefer Kennedy or Mondale. But Kennedy is no less anti-labor than Carter. He would merely be more effective, more professional, in leading his party in an assault on the workers, blacks and poor. Although Kennedy likes to pose as a 1970s-style "New Deal" progressive, with big-spending government programs, he, too, is for austerity.

But if Carter's personalizing the present energy/economic crisis has made it easy for Kennedy to offer himself as an alternative, politicizing the economy may have rather more dramatic effects. The economic crisis may produce sharp class explosions in the near future. Carter's talk of how the energy crisis will test the system and the "national purpose" may help to give the possible future economic battles a more political dimension. Workers will want to know what political programs the government has to meet the crisis. They will make demands that the capitalist government can only answer with false promises, neglect and repression. Both parties of capital will stand for continued sacrifice of the working class.

### For a workers future

Class-struggle militants within the trade-union movement will find heightened interest among the masses of workers for their calls for labor to break from the parties of big business and to oust the labor traitors from power in their unions. The fight for a workers party to demand the expropriation of Big Oil as part of a program to institute a workers government is the only answer that makes sense as workers are being thrown out on the streets by the thousands in the midst of the worst inflation since 1946. In the hands of a powerful and resolute labor movement, even sectors of the middle class could be attracted by this program. For unlike Jimmy Carter

and company, a workers government could deliver the gas.

The crisis of Carter's government is not simply personal, nor just hysterical ambition cast in revivalist style. Jimmy Carter has given official voice to a profound bourgeois pessimism. In his Sunday Night Sermon, Carter said: "It is clear that the true problems of our nation are much deeper -- deeper than gasoline lines or energy shortages. Deeper, even than inflation or recession". In this he is correct. But what the pulpit president defines as the "deep down, true problem" is a crisis of confidence and a failure of the American people to believe in the future.

It is of course true that many Americans have "lost confidence in the future" as Carter and his trendy sociologist advisers solemnly point out. And no wonder when the decay of capitalist society is promulgated as the end of history. Why should anyone believe in the future progress of dying capitalism? "Make it last", "use less", "sacrifice" have become the watchwords of a bourgeois class which has lost confidence in itself, confidence in its ability to expand production on any basis. Jimmy Carter to US: "Every gallon of oil each one of us saves is a new form of production that gives us more freedom, more confidence, that much more control over our own lives".

The bourgeois pessimists have good cause for gloom. They have seen more certain signs of US capitalism's morbidity than the irrationality of gas lines, inflation and recession. US imperialism has slid from global top dog to one of a number of dangerously competing imperialist forces. And they got beat in Vietnam.

The bourgeois crisis of confidence is not the cause of the irrationalities of the capitalist system and its hardships -- it is the result. This simple materialist truth shatters all the religious hokum of Carter and his sophisticated ideologists. The crisis of leadership in the bourgeoisie is a general epochal feature of a degenerate social order. The bizarre examples of Jimmy Carter and Richard Nixon seem more accidental and conjunctural. However, the crisis of humanity is not defined by bourgeois leadership, but rather by the crisis of proletarian revolutionary leadership.

It is the crisis of leadership of the proletariat, for decades betrayed by the Stalinists and Social Democrats, which has forestalled the workers revolution. That is why today the bourgeoisie desperately holds onto state power in a prolonged historic death agony of capitalism even as it groans about the future. This crisis will be resolved by the leadership of Trotskyist parties around the world, armed not only with a vision of the socialist future -- and a qualitatively higher level of material and cultural life -- but with a program for the seizure of state power through workers revolution.

Jimmy Carter and all the other bourgeois pessimists will be surprised to discover the working class and its allies not only "believing" in the possibility of future progress, but also willing to fight for that future until they win. ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 237, 3 August 1979)

## Rightist thugs...

Continued from page eight

something which the bourgeoisie no doubt appreciates. Another source of racial and ethnic tensions is the rivalry between the Vietnamese migrants and recently arrived southern European and Near Eastern migrants, who resent the relatively lavish official sponsorship afforded the boat people while their own relatives find it impossible to get into Australia.

### Form workers defence guards now!

Without giving any ground to the anti-communism which stands behind the influx of Vietnamese refugees, communists must combat every manifestation of racist prejudice, while seeking to undercut rivalry for jobs through the struggle for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. Furthermore, we stand in principle opposed to all the racist -- and anti-communist -- discriminatory regulations which are invariably a part of bourgeois immigration policy.

But we do not say of the Vietnamese refugees as does the "democratic socialist" International Socialists (IS) simply: "They're welcome here!" (Battler, 21 July). Are they all welcome? The professional torturers of the Thieu regime? The fascist gangs? Such types should find themselves back in the hands of their victims, the workers and peasants of Vietnam. The IS' enthusiastic "welcome" has nothing to do with combating "White Australia" racism -- they maintained a determined year-long silence in response to an outburst of racism after the first arrivals of boat people in Darwin two years ago. Rather it is simply a reflex capitulation to imperialist anti-communism. Thus while it now finally, grudgingly admits that there may be "actual" war criminals among the boat people (whom it then calls on the bourgeois state to extradite!), the IS' real position -- Stalinophobia -- was best expressed dur-

ing the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia: they are all "refugees from a repressive state capitalist regime" (Battler, 27 January).

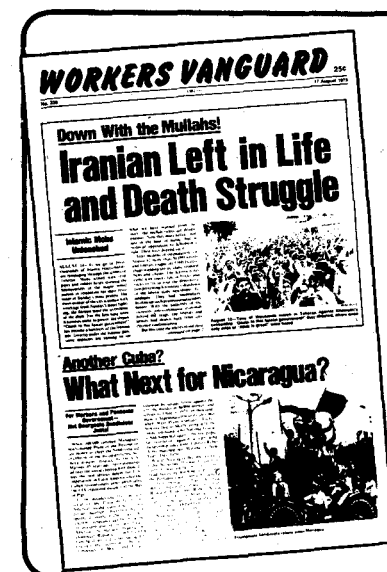
With the deepening recession and the generalised rightward shift in the political atmosphere, such still numerically insignificant fascist groupings as the National Front, the Nazi Party and particularly the National Alliance (NA), have singled out the highly visible influx of Vietnamese migrants in an increasingly aggressive campaign to spread their race-hate filth against all Asians. During the recent by-election in the federal seat of Grayndler, NSW -- which is heavily populated by Mediterranean migrants as well as a smattering of Vietnamese -- the NA secured over 1000 votes its first time out, campaigning on a program of virulently anti-Asian racism, and "yellow peril" epithets were posted outside the homes of Vietnamese families in the area. And only days after the Brisbane melee, Nazi Party and National Front "feuhrrers" Ross May and RJ Cameron threatened to stage a racist provocation outside the Fairy Meadow Vietnamese migrant hostel in Wollongong.

The outpouring of outrage from the migrant community and labour movement in Wollongong -- including a sharp "warning" from the South Coast Labour Council -- was enough to drive the Nazis back into their hole. But the racist backwardness on which these vermin flourish and which they hope to transform into genocidal pogroms will not go away so readily. The hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie's current binge of "anti-racism" must not blind the workers movement to the very real and growing danger of a nativist racist mobilisation which seizes on the boat people as a convenient target for its anti-Asian poison. While the GOANRV currently has license to rampage through the streets courtesy of Australian imperialism's enmity toward the Vietnamese Stalinist regime, anti-Asian chauvinism poses a far greater threat to the workers movement here: any mass fascist movement in Australia would invariably be mobilised around "White Australia" racism as a central plank.

The labour movement must make it clear that it will give no quarter to race-terrorists, anti-communist hitmen and other fascistic scum -- be they Vietnamese or Australian or other (like the Croatian Ustasha) -- teaching them a lesson in the only language these vermin understand. Immediately following the Sydney Trades Hall attack, the Spartacist League (SL) called on a 26 April meeting of the NSW Labor Council to "organise workers defence guards based on the trade unions to defend left and labour public functions from right-wing attack". Similarly, a union-based defence guard should have seen to it that the only "electioneering" the National Alliance did in Grayndler was in the sewers.

Predictably, the bureaucrats did nothing. And tied to its social-democratic, parliamentarist illusions that the fascists can be wished away through polite "debate", the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) refused to support the call for workers defence guards in either of those cases. Its candidate in Grayndler scarcely even mentioned the fascists. Finally, now that it is in the unpopular Bjelke-Petersen's and not Wran's territory, after the wharfies actually defended themselves, the SWP calls for workers defence guards "to defend meetings ["involving representatives of the Vietnamese government"] when the police refuse to do so" (Direct Action, 9 August; emphasis added).

The same ruling class which today encourages murderous forays by counterrevolutionary Vietnamese in its hatred for the Vietnamese revolution will on the morrow encourage anti-Asian pogroms in order to behead a revolutionary upsurge here. For Trotskyists workers defence guards are not a sometimes auxiliary to the bourgeois state's repressive apparatus. They are part and parcel of a program for the independent mobilisation of the workers counterposed to the bourgeoisie and its state. International solidarity with the Vietnamese workers and peasants as well as the direct defence of the workers movement demand the immediate formation of workers defence guards. Smash the Vietnamese rightist thugs and anti-Asian fascists! ■



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# Rhodesia...

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Lusaka paper just before the Commonwealth conference began. Denouncing the "racially biased" Thatcher for "blind and pusillanimous arrogance", this kept mouthpiece of Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda nevertheless managed to shower praise on the monarch. By the end of the conference, Kaunda had nothing but kind words for Thatcher as well. And after spending the previous weeks vowing their undying opposition to white supremacy, the "front-line" states readily agreed to British imperialism's new scheme for continued white control behind a facade of black government.

There is really nothing surprising in this shift. The key lies not in the particulars of the diplomatic manoeuvring, but in the failure of either the Patriotic Front or its "front-line" allies to deliver the coup de grace to the weakened Salisbury regime. George Orwell once observed of Churchill that he was "at any rate able to grasp that wars are not won without fighting". But that is exactly what the leaders of the Patriotic Front have attempted to do.

The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) of Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) of Joshua Nkomo have not waged a struggle with any of the tenacity and self-sacrifice of the Algerian or Angolan independence struggles. Nor is Mozambique inclined to face Rhodesia alone if Zambia comes to an understanding with the white supremacist regime. All of the front-line states are eager to accept some kind of face-saving peace in order to end the Rhodesian incursions and reopen their borders to international commerce.

So the Commonwealth conference ended in a compromise. Its ballyhooed proposal contains nothing new however: cosmetic changes in the white racist constitution and an "all-party" conference scheduled to begin in London on 10 September to prepare "fair and free elections, properly supervised under British government authority and with Commonwealth supervisors" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 August). Nkomo affirmed his "trust" in the front-line states, while the "militant" ZANU announced that it hoped "the British government will remain faithful to the spirit of the declaration" (*Washington Post*, 8 August), but wanted the imperialists to guarantee the dismantling of the white army (!) so that the Patriotic Front could take its place. Indeed, a "peacekeeping" force to supervise the proposed cease-fire and elections has already been mooted, including an Australian military presence.

The Australian bourgeoisie appeared at least as elated that the "colonials" had managed to rate a mention in the London papers as with the "breakthrough" itself. Fraser's "sheer hard work and drive helped make it all happen", waxed the *Sydney Morning Herald* (9 August). The "drive", by all accounts, appeared to consist primarily of well-timed leaks to the Australian press corps in Lusaka to bolster Fraser's sagging political capital at home and force a premature announcement of the agreement at what became the "historic barbecue".

## Sequel to the "internal settlement"

The British plan is based on a division of labour: Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique will drag the guerrillas to the bargaining table while the British, backed by US imperialism, force some "concessions" from Rhodesia. Thatcher explained, "If [Tanzania's] Julius Nyerere can deal with his problem, I hope you will accept that I can handle mine" (*New York Times*, 8 August). Nyerere and his ilk will have no qualms. Kaunda showed the true mettle of neo-colonialist "African socialism" when he deported 129 ZAPU supporters to white Rhodesia in the late 1960s, where a number were imprisoned or sentenced to death. As for those diehard white settlers who are prepared to fight to the last swimming pool, in the absence of outside imperialist support the narrow colonial caste -- outnumbered 24 to one -- has little hope of maintaining control. Whatever eventuates from the Commonwealth confab, one thing is sure: the democratic aspirations of the black masses of Rhodesia will not be satisfied under British bayonets!

What all the wrangling boils down to is that the imperialists think that, whatever its ultimate fate, the Salisbury regime need not be dumped as immediately unviable. But the "internal settlement's" pretences at democracy are so shoddy that there must be some further tinkering

with white-supremacist rule, so that Salisbury can have more time. The electoral farce Smith staged last April to place Muzorewa in "power" scarcely impressed even the imperialist politicians for whom it was intended. One of the bevy of hand-picked "international observers", British Lord Chitnis, having observed only a troop-coerced turnout, stated simply: "The one factor that should not be taken into account is that this was a fair and free election. It wasn't" (*Newsweek*, 7 May).

Under the "internal settlement", 28 of the 100 seats in parliament were reserved for whites, and the officer corps, judiciary and state bureaucracy remained -- by constitutional mandate -- majority white. As the *Australian* (7 August) noted, "Commonwealth leaders here have correctly identified Lieutenant-General Peter Walls as the real power behind the bishop". And Walls has not been queasy about exercising that power with racist ruthlessness. Only days before the Commonwealth gathering, Reverend Sithole, the former ZANU leader who now sits in Smith's parliament, denounced Walls for the "brutal, cold-blooded and merciless massacre" of 183 black army auxiliaries who were Sithole supporters.

The options with which the "internal settlement" confronted the imperialists were not palatable. Smith and Muzorewa undoubtedly offered a more "stable" scenario for imperialist interests, assuming their regime could be safely and indefinitely propped up. But a military victory by the Patriotic Front, equipped with Soviet arms and backed by the front-line states, raised the spectre of enhanced Soviet influence, increased confidence of the black masses and a more vulnerable South Africa, the imperialist bastion in the region. Thus while Thatcher, echoed by like-minded elements in the US Senate and in Fraser's L/NCP coalition, edged toward a lifting of sanctions and eventual recognition of the Smith/Muzorewa regime, more far-sighted representatives of imperialist interests knew that a stable neo-colonial settlement almost certainly required the incorporation of ZANU/ZAPU. They also knew that Mugabe and Nkomo were as willing to reach a neo-colonial accommodation as Muzorewa had been, if only it would install them in power.

## Patriotic Front in power -- new exploiters

The feuding leaders of ZANU and ZAPU, and their erstwhile colleagues who went over to the "internal settlement", have been angling for over two decades for precisely that goal. Guerrilla struggle was begun as a pressure tactic and escalated only because imperialism proved impervious to pressure. Nkomo, leader of ZAPU since its founding in 1961, was a former lay preacher and social worker cum trade-union bureaucrat who had flirted with the reactionary Moral Rearmament movement. As head of ZAPU he went on to spend much of his time abroad, pleading the nationalist case in imperialist capitals. The split in 1963 came after the organisation was banned and Nkomo opposed forming a new legal party in favour of a leadership in exile. The opposition led by Sithole attacked him for capital-hopping, but beyond that there were few discernible differences.

The idea that ZANU is some sort of left faction is a long-cherished illusion of sundry Third Worldists and Maoists, who noted its Chinese backing (like the Angolan FNLA!) and found support from Peking more palatable than the backing doled out to Nkomo's ZAPU by Rhodesian millionaire, "Tiny" Rowlands. But like Nkomo, Mugabe took off straight after the 1963 split to consult with the Tory minister for Central African affairs. As for Mugabe's social program:

"One senior Churchman who knows him well [Mugabe is a practising Roman Catholic] recalls Mr Mugabe's description of Zimbabwe as he would envisage it: 'There would be more Europeans than ever before because we need their expertise. There would be plenty of outside capital coming in. And there would be a guaranteed supply of plentiful, cheap labour.'" (*Irish Times*, 7 February)

This is the "African socialism" ZANU seeks: neo-colonialist exploitation not one whit different in kind from Nyerere's Tanzania or the Machel government in Mozambique.

The destruction of the racist Smith regime at the hands of ZANU and ZAPU would be a gain for the international working class. Solidarity with the guerrillas' military struggle against white supremacy, however, does not mean political support to the bourgeois nationalism of Nkomo or Mugabe, who want to establish a black capitalist regime dependent upon imperialism. Moreover, the nationalists' call for "majority rule" is a conveniently vague demand which leaves open the form of government -- democratic or bonapartist -- they plan to establish.

In contrast, Trotskyists call for a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage in order to meet the felt democratic needs of the black masses. In addition, we demand full trade-union rights for black workers and call for international working-class action to help win those rights. As a concrete act of solidarity we call for trade-union blacking of all military goods to

the Salisbury government and for industrial protest action against any attempt to ship imperialist troops to Rhodesia. But we recognise that the exploitation of the black workers and peasants will not end until -- guided by a Trotskyist vanguard party and linked to the massive and combative black proletariat of neighbouring South Africa -- they take power in their own hands, establishing a Zimbabwean workers and peasants government, within a socialist federation of southern Africa. ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 238, 17 August 1979)

# Iran...

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to denounce the fraudulent elections and expose the sham "assembly", whose only function is to rubber-stamp a theocratic constitution. Marxists counterpose to this fraud a sovereign, secular constituent assembly -- which could only come about by mobilising the proletariat and the oppressed masses behind it against the Islamic theocracy. Yet the Tudeh, the Fedayeen and the HKS all campaigned to prove their credentials as the loyal left wing of the "Iranian Revolution". These shameful "credentials" did not however prevent these opportunists from being banned from radio and TV, having their leaflets and posters destroyed, and being subject to continual intimidation.

## Workers revolution or Islamic terror -- the only choice

After a year of enthusing over and apologising for the reactionary "holy men", the reformist left is now confronted point-blank with this simple fact: the political revolution which installed Khomeini was in no way an advance over the tyrannical regime of the shah. Only when the arrest and beating of their own Iranian comrades compelled them to, did the fake-Trotskyist SWP finally stop enthusing over the rule of Khomeini. Even then, it minimised the plight of its imprisoned comrades, as a sacrificial offering to the disastrous political strategy of tailing the mullahs, limiting its defence work to telegrams protesting its loyalty to the "Iranian Revolution". And even now, now when the blood is flowing in the mountains of Kurdistan and the streets of Teheran, the SWP dismisses Khomeini's attacks as "desperate measures taken at a time when his position is becoming weaker, not stronger" (*Direct Action*, 23 August).

Today they stand defenceless in the face of Khomeini's white terror, as yesterday they hailed his coming to power, supported the Muslim puritanism of his followers as "anti-imperialist", and even denied the political significance of the mullahs. Today the SWP frets that "there remain large numbers [of urban workers] with illusions in the 'Islamic republic'" (*Direct Action*, 30 August). Who helped foster those illusions? Who dismissed the Islamic Republic as a pseudonym for a workers and peasants government? Who called the veil a symbol of protest against the shah? These were the miserable lawyers' arguments the SWP used to justify hailing the all-important "mass movement" -- of Islamic reaction.

Faced with the spectre of a genocidal massacre, a KDP leader recently denounced Khomeini for "gradually restoring Iran to a black religious dictatorship of the Middle Ages" (*Newsweek*, 3 September). This was Khomeini's aim from the start -- ignored, falsified, denied by the whole spectrum of the revisionist left internationally. But Khomeini's attempt to impose a "black religious dictatorship" will not be defeated by the nationalist guerrillaism of the KDP. Here is what we said at the time of his rise to power:

"The Iranian workers have proved their willingness to lay down their lives to topple an oppressive dictatorship. If they are not to be put under the yoke of an equally reactionary 'Islamic republic', the three million strong proletariat must begin now, before the stabilisation of a new dictatorship, to prepare a struggle for power. Only the revolutionary leadership necessary for the independent mobilisation of the working class is missing." (*ASP* no 61, March 1979)

There must be no question of pressuring this Islamic reaction, drenched with the blood of the oppressed nationalities, into a democracy. The left and labour movement must prepare for the time when the regime's loyal militiamen join with the clerical fascist goon squads in their anti-leftist pogroms. Time is running out. The millions-strong Iranian proletariat must be organised -- in trade unions, factory committees, workers militias, drawing around them the peasants, the oppressed nationalities and all secular democratic forces -- in a united-front defence against the Islamic white terror. Either defeat at the hands of Islamic reaction or workers revolution. There is no other way. ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 238, 17 August 1979)

## Sydney Spartacist League public office

2nd floor  
112 Goulburn St,  
Sydney

Thursday: 5.30 to 9.30 pm  
Saturday: 12 noon to 5 pm

## Revolutionary literature

SEPTEMBER 1979





## Imperialist anti-Vietnam offensive hits Brisbane

# Stop rightist thugs!

For the second time in less than four months, counterrevolutionary Vietnamese thugs here have launched a brutal assault on a meeting of the labour movement. After a year of attacks on left-wing Vietnamese migrants, on 20 April 200 of these fascist scum stormed a meeting at the Sydney Trades Hall at which the Vietnamese consul was present, leaving one trade unionist with a knife wound and several others severely bruised.

Then, on 6 August in Brisbane, over 100 howling and screaming thugs armed with kung-fu sticks, poles and rocks charged the Waterside Workers Hall as two visiting Vietnamese trade-union officials, Do Trong Hop and Nguyen Thuyet, who had addressed a meeting there were about to leave. But for the vigorous defence provided by a cordon of wharfies who courageously surrounded the Vietnamese officials, the fascist mob might have succeeded in its lynch-terror designs. Eighty of Queensland premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen's cops who were on the scene moved in only when it became clear that the anti-communists were about to receive a lesson in kind from the outraged wharfies, some of whom had managed to grab snooker cues from the hall. Only four of the right-wing thugs were among the nine arrested. We demand that all charges against the other five be immediately and unconditionally dropped!

Bjelke-Petersen, who has arrested *thousands* of left-wing opponents of his reactionary ban on street demonstrations, not surprisingly had nothing but the mildest rap on the knuckles for these anti-communist "demonstrators": "I sympathise with the Vietnamese migrants but ... they have to obey the law just like anyone else". Under the sanction of official "sympathy" such fascist bands as the Greater Overseas Alliance for the National Restoration of Vietnam (GOANRV) headed by former Thieu aide, Vo Dai Ton, will continue to pursue their bloodthirsty, revanchist cause against "communist oppression" ... unless they are stopped by the concerted strength of the labour movement.

### Fraser - anti-communist not anti-racist

In order to discredit the Brisbane wharfie's defence of the Vietnamese Stalinist officials, the bourgeois press has raised a hue and cry about the "racism" lurking behind their action. Coming from a ruling class which has a century of brutal anti-Asian racist exclusion and oppression to account for -- which explicitly raised the

"yellow peril" spectre in order to win support for its imperialist military presence in Vietnam a decade ago -- this hypocritical "anti-racism" is hard to stomach. What really stands behind it is the Australian bourgeoisie's firm commitment to the imperialist propaganda offensive directed against the Vietnamese revolution, which has chosen the plight of the "boat people" as a convenient focus. As a junior partner of US imperialism, the Fraser government is integrally aligned with the US/China anti-Soviet alliance, and it is that, rather than any new-found concern for the downtrodden masses of Asia, which accounts for the cordial welcome afforded the boat people. It is this fact also which encourages the GOANRV and their ilk, with official patronage from sections of the Liberal Party, to carry out their murderous attacks against the labour movement.

Not that Fraser and his bourgeois backers are about to open the mythical "floodgates" to the Vietnamese refugees. "White Australia" was *official* policy for a century; it has been unofficial for the last decade. And for all of Whitlam's cosmetic reforms, the door is still barred to all but a tiny handful of highly qualified Asian migrants, and in the case of the boat people, those who serve as fodder for the imperialists' anti-communist propaganda mill. Concerned about touching off a racist backlash that could threaten its electoral hopes, the government is set on a maximum intake of 40,000 by the end of 1980. As we pointed out over a year ago (see *ASP* no 51, March 1978), blanket opposition to the entry of the Vietnamese refugees -- many of whom are here only in search of an easier life -- could only be chauvinist, but we are "decidedly unenthusiastic" about the arrival of these refugees from a social revolution.



Brisbane wharfies fight off fascist Vietnamese thugs, 6 August. Form workers defence guards now!

Even given the relatively small numbers, however, the bourgeoisie has been quick to take advantage of the side benefits they are likely to accrue from a reservoir of labour which is socially isolated, predominantly anti-communist and prepared to accept the "dirty jobs" Australians will not. Corporations involved in labour-intensive industries are already showing a marked preference for Indochinese workers over Australian and European-born job applicants. One Victorian company, Paton Brakes, for example, has over 300 Indochinese out of a total of 1400 workers employed on its assembly lines.

In the context of continuing international recession and a labour bureaucracy trained in scapegoating "cheap Asian goods" for continuing unemployment here, this situation can readily fuel racist antagonisms which are divisive and destructive to the labour movement as a whole --

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## Imperialists borrow time from African nationalists

# Crush white-ruled Rhodesia!



ZANU guerrillas train; ZANU leaders accommodate imperialism

With the signing of the Commonwealth agreement at Lusaka, Zambia last month, Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher has succeeded in buying more time for the beleaguered Rhodesian racist regime. Almost eighteen months ago, Ian Smith and a handful of black puppets patched together a patently fraudulent "internal settlement" designed to preserve white minority rule behind a black mask. But Bishop Abel Muzorewa has never gained recognition as anything more than the black figurehead he is; the hoped-for mass defections from the Patriotic Front never materialised; and, as a result, the "chicken run" of Rhodesian whites to easier living in Britain, South Africa and Australia has continued apace, bleeding the already tiny white minority of some 240,000 by over 1500 a month.

White rule in Rhodesia must ultimately perish. But the question is how long is the long run? Rather than simply collapsing of their own accord, the racists have launched a series of terror raids into Zambia and Mozambique, striking at guerrilla bases. They continue to penetrate with ease deep into Zambia and have backed a guerrilla campaign by Portuguese colons de-

signed to harass the more militarily prepared Mozambique regime.

The barbaric anachronism of white settler rule must be smashed! Unlike the proportionally larger white population of South Africa, which can mount a massive military defence, the Rhodesian oppressors are cornered. Despite the mass murder and the Vietnam-style "resettlement" of rural blacks, the arrogant white minority of Rhodesia cannot suppress the black resistance. Trotskyists reject any political accommodation with the butchers ensconced in Salisbury and support a quick military victory by the forces of the Patriotic Front.

### Margaret Thatcher's "burden"

The setting for the Lusaka "breakthrough" was appropriate to its neo-colonial aim: a meeting of the bourgeois nationalist dictators, "African socialists" and Tory imperialists who swear common fealty to the Union Jack and the Queen, titular head of the Commonwealth. A telling indication of what could be expected from this Kipling-esque charade was provided by a piece in a

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