Islamic thugs on bloody rampage Down with Khomeini’s “Holy War” on left!

To the accompaniment of verses from the Koran and “revolutionary” chants in praise of the dying ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, “leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic”, Iran’s 213-strong majlis (parliament) convened in Teheran on 28 May. After the long-drawn out, heavily-rigged election fraud, victory had predictably gone to the mullahs of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP). And while the world capitalist press waited in vain for news as to what the mullahs had in store for the 53 US hostages held since last November, the majlis made clear that its major preoccupation was going to be — as before — how best to consolidate its shaky theocratic grip on the country.

With an annual inflation rate of 50 percent, an unemployment figure which has risen to one-third of the workforce, and a massive drop in oil exports from 6 million barrels a day under the shah to 700,000 daily now, the mullahs’ Iran is in acute economic crisis. At the same time, it is facing challenges on three other fronts: from a well-equipped Iraqi army with which it has been skirmishing along Iran’s northwest borders; from Kurdish nationalists resisting Persian chauvinism in turban; and from the left, whom the mullahs tried to annihilate during the purges of the universities at the end of April.

Khomeini’s state apparatus is still chronically weak, too. Yet if he is to succeed in his efforts to “cut short the hands” of the internal enemies of his theocratic rule, he must have a strong, consolidated Islamic army at his disposal. We have said from the beginning that this can only be forged in bloody slaughter against the minorities and the left. But as the past months have shown, there will be blood on both sides. As long as the armed guerrilla fighters can call out a hundred thousand supporters to the streets as they did in their separate marches on May Day, and as long as the Kurds and Turkomans and others continue to resist Persian chauvinism with gun in hand in the mountains and villages, mullah rule will be shaky.

Confronted with the economic sanctions, the war threats and actual military aggression of the US, Khomeini has been partially able to bolster his still unsteady rule through his calls for national religious martyrdom to oppose the “Great Satan”. Certainly, Carter’s helicopter fiasco in the Great Kavir...
In the last issue of Australasian Spartacist (no 73, May 1980), the article “Maoists challenge the Blueprint” misrepresents the political implications of the Maoists’ franked-flyer appeal to the Carter/ Franks-Brickman boycott of Soviet goods by mentioning that a number of supporters of EF Hill’s (Marxist-Leninist) Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM-M) had urged a boycott of May Day—once their “one day in the year to associate with the Soviet workers”. However, the Hillite rag Vanguard called for a big Soviet boycott. But the most notable aspect of the Melbourne May Day march this year was that for the first time in over a decade there was no separate Maoist platform nor was there a strongly anti-Soviet stance among the Trotskyites. La Trobe State University students (who usually support the Trotskyites on campus) were marching behind the “Soviet supporters” who were also among those moving a motion to support the SOVIET workers. Though there was a noticeably small contingent as the neo-Maoist Turkish leftist student group (IHK) and a small body of “independence” demonstrators, the rest of the Maoists marched with the Trotskyists, including ethic minoritised groups such as the neo-Marxist Turkish community, etc.

Dear Editor:

We recently read your article “Spartists set up opponents for the sack” in the Socialist Press No. 195 dated April 23, 1980. As a group of workers supported by the Spartacist League/Britain’s WSL, we we’re interested to note your description of the strikes we were involved in during the steel strike.

The allegations that the Spartacists had threatened “to frighten生成 workers” by scabbing, was totally untrue. While many steelworkers did not always agree with our political strategy and platform the trade union work we were involved in was not to the detriment of our own unions. We had every respect for their involvement and seriousness, wanting as we did all, the victory of the struggle. In effect the Spartacists were welcomed and invited to the picket lines of many unions including some of our own disaffiliated members. The WSL’s flying picket during the steel strike because they committed themselves to supporting the majority of our strike. This we would ask of any organisation in the labour movement, we needed all the support possible. Equally many steelworkers, ourselves included, found what they had to say was always something to think about, interesting and we at least benefited by discussing with them.

As far as we can tell, a lot of your arguments centre around the Spartacists attacking people for scabbing. As far as we are concerned after our 13 week strike, where scabbing—scabbing took place, like Hadfields—Sheerness etc., we don’t like people who cross picket lines either.

We hope that in future that if you want to treat yourselves more seriously you should address yourselves to a more truthful account of events.

Waiting for the publication of our letter in the next publication of your paper.

Yours faithfully,

J.K. Hall (Stainless Wks., Sheffield)
M.H. Gordon (Shop Steward T&G Stainless Works)
cc: Spartacist League
  — reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 256, 16 May 1980
Hawke, Moore blackmail 35-hour "campaign"

Strike for a shorter work week

Official unemployment in this country now stands at 440,000; unofficially, it could be anywhere up to twice that. After five years of grinding inflation, the real wages of those lucky enough to have jobs have dropped as prices march upwards and indexation wage rises lag further and further behind. And with a new international downturn on the way, the worst is clearly yet to come. Both the defence of workers’ livelihoods and the very preservation of the organised workers movement demand a fight by the unions for jobs for all.

Instead, Bob Hawke, the official head of the ACTU, has just ground his heel in the face of the unemployed and all workers. When the eleven unions of the Metal Trades Federation, covering 500,000 workers, launched a “campaign” for a 35-hour week to “create jobs” last month, the Arbitration president, Sir John Moore, replied with a piece of vicious blackmail. This “impartial” bosses’ toady announced on 26 May that he would not even continue to discuss whether or not to grant a puny 500-hour wage rise in the national wage case then being fought by the trade unions against further industrial action.

For Hawke has a lot of betrayals under his belt, but this time he didn’t even give lip service to the unions’ demands. He condescended to reopen the wage determination Workers of America (above right), as "an economist and former treasurer"; denounced it as folly. But at mass meetings across the country, rank- and-file metal workers voted overwhelmingly for it. The bosses undoubtedly fear not just another rise in “labour costs”, but see behind the 35-hour week demand the potential spectre of a real struggle against unemployment by an increasingly bitter working class. For the workers, the prospect of striking a real blow against unemployment is what’s promised. But the plain truth is that the sort of “campaign” which has been foisted on the metal workers is a bureaucratic, reformist fraud.

What the unions official put forward at the mass meetings, and bureaucratically forced through with no amendments, was a “campaign” incapable of winning anything. Once each month the metal workers are supposed to work only 35 hours, and it is left to the individual shops to demand payment for the lost wages. In other words, a 5-hour “strike” once a month! At the mass meeting in Melbourne’s Festival Hall on 20 May, the “left-wing” Victorian AMWUS secretary John Halpenny let slip the truth, that the bureaucrats never intended to win a significant shortening of the work week at the first place. “With positive action we might get the employers to talk”, he said, which is the sort of thing that could be expected from such pathetic pressure tactics.

For Halpenny and his fellow “left-wing” AMWUS bureaucrats like Dick Scott and the Communist Party’s (CPA) Laurie Carmichael, the 35-hour week is a utopian scheme to make capitalism work better. By creating more jobs it would mean “more income tax and less dole payments”, Halpenny told the mass meeting, as well as “reviving ... those parts of the Australian economy that are now sick”. With such an utterly bankrupt demand under capitalism, it will take a new revolutionary leadership of the working class from the ravages of a capitalism in decay.

To fight for these demands requires a massive nationwide strike coupled with sit-down strikes and factory occupations in response to the threat of refrench- men of the “guerrilla tactics” advocated by Halpenny and his former comrades in the CPA. Instead, we must combine with the struggle for massive wage increases and cost-of-living clauses to ensure that wages keep pace with inflation. Unlike AMWUS Assistant National Secretary Laurie Carmichael, who trades off more jobs against more money in a new campaign, we demand for the right to a livelihood demands a significant shortening of the work week.

The 1200 strong labour turnout (above left) for the 19 April rally in San Francisco to protest against anti-Nazi leafleting are on the march. They are theocal labourers driving to work. But the worst is yet to come. On 19th birthday and taught the fascist creeps a lesson they’ll never forget (see our article in Australasian Spartanist no 73, May 1980). The mobilisation of official fascist agents like the militant phone workers of the Communication Workers of America (above right), blacks, Chicanos, Jews, homosexuals and leftists was the basis of the hard work carried out by the April 19 Committee Against Nazis (ANCAN), initiated and heavily built by our comrades of the Spartacist League/US. ANCAN mobilised in the trade unions. The 35-hour week is a genuine demand which will lead that struggle to victory.
After his provocative “rescue mission” fiasco in the Iranian desert, even Jimmy Carter’s imperialists are eying him with increasing unease. But the inability of Carter’s drive toward World War III is more than just the madness of a man who wants to get re-elected to the presidency by bringing the world to the edge of nuclear holocaust. Carter is currently the leader of the most powerful and ruthless ruling class the world has seen — and one which has slipped down from the position of unchallenged imperialist dominance it held from the end of the last world war until the early seventies. The American bourgeoisie is quite capable of launching a nuclear war in an attempt to regain its position as imperialist top dog. There is only one way to avert the threat they pose — workers revolution to sweep rotting capitalism and its crazed rulers from the face of the earth.

The architects of the US war drive against the Soviet degenerated workers state acting as the imperialists’ puppet as a pretext for a massive arms escalation. But the Red Army in Afghanistan is fighting to defend the interests of the oppressed against counterrevolutionary bandits backed by the CIA. A Soviet victory over the Islamic rebels would open up the way for the liberation of the oppressed Afghan workers, and in particular would mean a gigantic step forward for Afghan women — currently treated by the Islamic fundamentalists as chattel slaves. The response of any revolutionaries to this situation should have been immediate: Hail Red Army! Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples! Defend the Soviet Union against imperialist aggression!

But most of it is given over to the call for total war drive. One can only marvel at the woeful state of the CPA/SPA editorial board — what was once the most virile party in the world has been effectively eviscerated by the split of the old Stalinist wing! CPA/SPA: Afghanistan virtually as soon as the Kremlin sycophants to the anti-Soviet war propaganda. CCP/SPA: Afghanistan. The 7 May joint statement pledges to support the “peace-loving imperialists that their war drive is not in their own rational self-interest. Forget about Afghanistan, don’t mention the old Stalinist wing! That’s how the CPA/SPA used to stand, isn’t it? The CPA/SPA called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces. CPA/SPA: Afghanistan. The 7 May joint statement pledges to support the “peace-loving imperialists that their war drive is not in their own rational self-interest. Forget about Afghanistan, don’t mention the old Stalinist wing! That’s how the CPA/SPA used to stand, isn’t it? The CPA/SPA called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces.

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In its tirades against those who hail the Red Army action, the CPA has genuine common ground with the anti-Soviet renegades of the CPA, which denounces the grey-suited, conservative bureaucracy of Brezhnev and Kossygin, of all people, for the "export of revolution". While the CPA echoes the line of TASS communiques that the Red Army incursion was under the sanction of Article 51 of the UN Charter, the CPA turns the facts right way up, denouncing the action for violating the sacred "principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries".

"Revolution on bayonets"

Well, the Soviet divisions certainly did "violate" the artificial boundaries of the Afghan state when they landed at Kabul airport, and they certainly intervened in "internal affairs" when they liquidated Halafshah Amin and installed Babrah Karmal in power in his place. But faced with the prospect of a hostile, anti-communist regime being established on its southern border, the Soviet bureaucracy had no option but to intervene for the sake of belatedly else. "export of revolution" was in progress. Their action clearly aided the liberation of the oppressed of Afghanistan and the defence of the Soviet workers state against imperialism.

Invoking the "principle of the non-export of revolution", as Eric Aarons does in the CPA's "Australian Left Review" (no 73), is only a cynical evasion coming from a party which is, fundamentally, dedicated against revolution full stop. In fact, it is only a "principle" for liberal petty-bourgeois democrats. The class struggle is international and does not halt at formal state boundaries, as both the bourgeois rulers and genuine communists understand. But it is opposition to international proletarian revolution which unites the CPA, wedded to the nationalist interests of the Soviet bureaucracy in the name of "socialism in one country", and the CPA, with its parochial Australian reformist ambitions.

Eric Aarons pontificates that outside aid is fine so long as it does not displace foreign local effort to reintegration the main force, for this would be tantamount to the export of revolution."

Thus, for the socialist interests of the working class can never stand higher than the right of a particular nation to self-determination. But for Marxists, the Soviet bureaucracy's real crime in Afghanistan would be to pull out leaving the quarrelled feudal (and pre-feudal) social structure of the country intact. And as the Red Army withdrew from northern Iran after World War II shows, the Kremlin leaders are capable in the name of "peaceful coexistence"—of handing back areas they control to the capitalist "sphere of influence". Yet if Afghanistan was effectively incorporated into the Soviet bloc, this would be an historic advance compared to present conditions— even though its incorporation would only be as a bureaucratically deformed workers state. However, for the CPA "national self-determination" is everything, thus in Afghanistan, it propounds reintegration from within to revolution from without.

In any case, opposition in principle to the "export of revolution" is a flat denial of Marxist internationalism. When the Bolsheviks led the Russian workers to power in October 1917, they knew that the new Soviet workers state would have to link up with the victorious workers of other countries. Of course, each proletariat would have to rely mainly on its own forces in its struggle for power, but intervention by the Red Army to either assist or precipitate such a struggle could at certain points be crucial to the success or failure of the socialist revolution.

Thus the Bolsheviks had no qualms, when it became necessary in the course of the civil war against the Whites and the imperialist powers, about sending the Red Army into Georgia and Latvia from the hold of the capitalists and landlords. In 1919 the shortlived Hungarian Soviet Republic, which in good part due to its own errors had already, probably a majority of Hungary's peasantry and national minorities, faced defeat at the hands of the white army of Admiral Horthy. Lenin specifically ordered the Ukrainian Red Army to advance into Galicia and

Bukovina, a step 'essential for contact with Soviet Hungary'. Just before Horthy's victory Lenin was forced to inform Bela Kun: "We are aware of Hungary's grave and dangerous situation and are doing all we can. But speedy assistance is sometimes physically impossible. Try to hold out as long as you can."

But the military campaign did not succeed, to the great misfortune of the socialist cause. Likewise the Red Army was unable to cross the Vistula at Warsaw in 1920, thus preventing a link up (by direct invasion of Poland) with the German proletariat. Had the Bolsheviks been able to achieve that connecting link, a successful proletarian revolution in industrially advanced Germany might have occurred, which would have ended the imperialist encirclement of the fledgling Soviet state and made the material conditions— isolation of the revolution in a backward country— obsolete. The road to the defence of the gains of October. The road to peace is the road of class struggle— which will overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution and destroy the bureaucracies through political revolution. "Victory to the Red Army in Afghanistan!" is a Trotskyist slogan. Only the Trotskyists, who stand for the program of international class struggle—the program of Lenin and the Bolsheviks— can really defend the existing gains of the won class and lead the way forward to the conquest of new ones.
The exodus of thousands of Cubans to the shores of Florida has turned into one more embarrassment for Jimmy Carter as he bumbles through this election year. It started out as a broad-scale campaign to disrupt and intimidate the Castro regime and reinforce US imperialist domination of the region. The weapons included a propaganda blitz against “Communist tyranny,” economic pressure on Caribbean governments friendly to Havana and provocative military maneuvers openly aimed at Cuba. But now Carter is desperately trying to cut off the flow of “boat people” to Key West. And while Washington’s earlier and current set the “Liberty City” ghetto aflame in anger over racist injustices, thousands of Cubans riot in the “Camp Libertad” refugee center, trying to escape the barbed-wire enclosures where they have been penned up since arriving in the “land of the free.”

When 10,000 people crowded into the Peruvian embassy in early April to demand asylum, Carter promised that the United States would welcome the anti-Castro Cubans with “an open heart and open arms.” But Carter’s plan backfired when Castro took him at his word. Everyone in the Peruvian embassy was granted asylum and anyone else who wanted to leave was granted permission to do so as well. The Cuban government made its position clear:

“If the Peruvian government wants to receive asylum-seekers and lump elements in Cuba, we will gladly let them go. But Carter’s plan is ideologically opposed to the Revolution and as long as the policy of Washington is reversed, common criminals and counterrevolutionaries is becoming less and less clear.”

— “Cuba’s Position,” Granma, April

When an airlift to Costa Rica was suspended by Castro on April 18, friends and relatives from Florida sent boats to American policy in Guantanamo Bay, even as the Carter administration has neatly reversed the facts to fit its own propaganda needs. The Cubans are trying to escape the violence of the bloody, US-backed Duvalier dictatorship: their motive is simple — they want to stay alive. The real reason for the government’s closed door policy here is racism toward the black Haitians and the anti-communist instinct to stand by your despots. Like Chilenos seeking to escape the specter of Pinoshcu’s repression and refugees from other right-wing dictatorships, they are turned away because, as one lawyer put it, “if they can stay, 20 million more hemispheres in Cuba!” (New York Times, May 3). As a result, more than 600 have been sent back to face imprisonment, torture and frequently death at the hands of “Babu Doc” Duvalier’s killers.

None of the Cubans, however, have even claimed to fear for their lives, in a country where there has not been a single execution since Batista’s most sadistic murders were shot in 1959. Many do admit that they have been in jail, claiming that they were imprisoned for political reasons so they would not be shipped back for being the common criminals that they no doubt are. Most are simply looking for a better standard of living in the land of supposed capitalist riches. It should be clear, however, that once ensigned among the gusano-led Cuban exile communities, most of them (especially when they discover that Miami streets are not paved with gold) will be recruited into the network of clandestine reactionary murder gangs such as the notorious Omega 7.

Along with the criminals, degenerates and deserters, Castro includes homosexuals in the category of “social scum.” “Cuba’s Position,” reprinted from the official organ of the Cuban Communist Party, states: “The so-called anti-Castro homosexuals are not persecuted or harassed, there a quite a few of them living in gambling and drugs who find it difficult to satisfy their sexual desires here.” What we have here is an expression of the Cuban regime’s fascist and “undesirable” treatment of homosexuals as social parasites. Perhaps some of the homosexuals who are leaving Cuba are in fact “social scum,” but no country homosexuals are not persecuted or harassed, there a quite a few of them involved in gambling and drugs who find it difficult to satisfy their sexual desires here.”

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Cuban working mass say “Down with the blockade!”, “Yankees out of Guantnamo!”, not been confined to a press smear campaign along with the two decades of old economic embargo and preservation of a naval base on Cuban soil at Guantnamo Bay. American policy in the Caribbean is returning to the days of “dollars or death” and “the big stick.” Thus the US-dominated International Monetary Fund recently cut off the pro-Cuban Manley government in Jamaica, starving it of import credits in a blatant attempt to bring it down in upcoming elections. Carter/Brzezinski are reportedly talking of blocking the tourist and nutmeg island of Grenada, the latest “revolutionary” regime in this American lake. And in the former banana republic of Nicaragua, pro-US capitalist representatives walked off the figurehead junta in early May as a clear warning to the Sandinista rulers.

Toward Cuba itself Washington policy has been old-fashioned gunboat diplomacy, even before Carter seized upon Afghanistan as a pretext for his anti-Soviet Cold War offensive. Last summer there were the fireworks over Russian aid to Cuba (supposedly inside Bahama’s territorial sphere is certainly evident that the US Navy to Cuba actually started arriving in large numbers (close to 65,000 have entered the US in the last few weeks) the “land of opportunity” was not standing with outstretched arms. Particularly when it became clear that a large proportion of the “tired and poor” were common criminals and other “undesirables” Carter did a quick about-face: “We will not permit our country to be used as a dumping ground for criminals who represent a danger to our society, and we will begin exclusion proceedings against these people at once” (New York Times, 15 May 1980). The “freedom flotilla” of small fishing boats and pleasure craft to Florida was more than Carter had accounted for.

Big Stick and Racism

In an absurd attempt to disguise the cutoff, Carter proposed an airlift and sealed the borders of Cuba actually started arriving in large numbers (close to 65,000 have entered the US in the last few weeks) the “land of opportunity” was not standing with outstretched arms. Particularly when it became clear that a large proportion of the “tired and poor” were common criminals and other “undesirables” Carter did a quick about-face: “We will not permit our country to be used as a dumping ground for criminals who represent a danger to our society, and we will begin exclusion proceedings against these people at once” (New York Times, 15 May 1980). The “freedom flotilla” of small fishing boats and pleasure craft to Florida was more than Carter had accounted for.

However, no one is starving in Cuba, certainly not in fact “social scum”, but no country homosexuals are not persecuted or harassed, there a quite a few of them involved in gambling and drugs who find it difficult to satisfy their sexual desires here.”

Cuba Si, Yanqui No

As Castro pointed out in 1965, if the US promised unlimited immigration to the people of any other Latin American country, they would pack up overnight. It is certainly evident that the higher standard of living in the United States is the most powerful attraction. However, no one is starving in Cuba,
Islamic "revolution" crushes left on Iranian campuses

Crazy. Carter’s bungled imperialist “Mission Impossible” in 1979 demonstrat- ed he will do anything to stay in of- fice as he drives toward World War III. The Spartacist League says, “Hands Off Iran!” But unlike the Socialists Workers Party (SWP) and their cohorts in Iran, the HKE, we do not defend the equally crazy “Imam” Khomeini who also will do any- thing to contain his petit-bourgeois revolut- ionary petit-bourgeois theory. Khomeini opposes imperialism only when it stands in the way of plundering Iran back into the seventh century. He has no qualms about using American Phantom jets and helicopter gunsports to massacre Kurdish rebels in Sanadaj. He offers “uncon- ditional support” to his fellow Islamic clergymen in Afghanistan when they are tools of US imperialism and the CIA. Khomeini and the Afghan mullahs and the US Imperialists know that their main enemy is the Soviet Union. It was the October Revolution which broke the reac- tionary social power of mosque and bazaar as it liberated the Moslem border­ ceded themselves in buildings at Teheran University report that twenty of their comrades were murdered. In provincial- universities the Islamic goons were even more vicious. At the university in Shiraz more than 400 were injured.

The SWP/HKE have praised the veil the symbol of the Islamic enslavement of women, as “progressive”; they have denied the right of the oppressed nationalities of Iran to self-determination; they have sup­ por ted Khomeini’s Persian chauvinism to the point of backing Iran in their border war with Iraq; they have hailed as “brothers” the Pasdars — “revolution- ary guards” — the hated butchers of the workers, leftists, Kurds, Arabs and other minorities. Now they have carried their criminal support to Khomeini’s “Islamic revolution” to its logical conclusion: they hail the bloody purge of leftists on the campuses and denounce as “sectarian opposition” those who try to defend their organization and their very lives from the Shi’tie clergy’s storm troopers. The SWP — like Carter over his

Iranian military escapes — has taken full responsibility for Iran’s criminal defense of the massacre of leftists. In an article titled “Why Carter Fears ‘Un- raveling America’” (Intercritical Press, May, also reprinted as “Helbolly — Events on Iranian Campuses” in Direct Action, 14 May), the SWP quotes from an HKE state- ment published on 21 April at the height of the Islamic goon attacks upon campus leftists:

“The Tudeh Party, Mujahedeen, Fedayeen, Paskor and other so-called Marxist organizations, which always start from their own narrow, sectarian interests, have essentially opposed brave action. These forces, under the pretext of defending the ‘barricade of freedom’ which the Tudeh Party has created, are blocking the country and that the camps are the last bastion they have mobilized against the action of the ISOs (Islamic Student Organization).”

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

This recent betrayal plays the HKE far to the right of Tudeh which was so subsequent to its split with the Trotskyists and have been derisively referred to as “assistant ayatollahs.” By this act the HKE is traitor to every faction of the US-imperialist socialist movement stand for. As if to compound their crime by showing the spoils as well as the dead bodies, Militant carries with its article a large photo caption showing the lair of the im­ prisoned HKE members leaving jail and stating that “in Iran, deepening revol­ ution — the US imperialists abroad open to debate of different view­ points,” Tell that to the Fedayeen who lost these organizations at Teheran Uni­ versity. With the SWP’s full approval, the HKE has offered up the lives of the Iranian leftists to Islamic reaction to save their own skins. But for the East the 1965 Indonesian coup demonstrated on a massive and catastrophic scale, for those even remotely connected to the left, that opposition is nobody’s skin including their own.

 therapy — reprinted from Workers Vanguard 95, 25 June 1980

which is a lot more than one can say about any other Latin American country — or the ghetto poor in the US. As Trotskyists we uncompromisingly defend the struggle of the Cuban workers masses to maintain the revolution. Even today the majority of Cubans have contempt for those who deserted the revolution for a little personal profit on the anniversary of the Cuban victory in the Bay of Pigs invasion, April 19, over a million people demonstrated their opposition to the “ecum, parasites, shirkers, profiteers and other who have lent themselves to the imperialist attack on Cuba. And on May 20 more than a million crowded into Revolution Square in Havana in one of the biggest rallies of the entire revolutionary struggle.

The fact that revolutionary enthusiasm has not died out in Cuba is heartening. Partly it is due to the fact that 20 years of imperialist and reaction, military attacks and counterrevolutionary subversion have forced a gardening military and the still little band of revolutionaries under the gun. Aid to struggles against imperialism will form the core of the struggle, as in Angola during 1975-76, certainly has contributed — though this is the exception rather than the rule. Setting down to build “socialism in one island”. Castro long ago shut off the pipeline to Latin American guerrillas (except where they are allied with bourgeoisie patrons, as was the case of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas).

As Trotskyists we uncompromisingly defend the social conquests of the Cuban revolution, while at the same time denouncing the bureaucratically deformed nature of the Cuban workers state. With power concentrated in the hands of a small bonapartist caste, there is no soviet democracy for the working people. Only through a political revolu­ tion can the Cuban masses take the reins. A healthy workers state would not rely on ephemeral good relations with Latin American capitalist states or the pipelines. The Yankee imperialism but would seek to extend proletarian revolution throughout the Americas and the world.

On the US left the pro­Moscow Communist Party pretty much depends on the line from Havana. With its blinders the CP can neither explain why tens of thousands might seek to link the supposed socialist paradise nor offer revolutionary leadership to Cuban workers and peasants. Their only answer is the chimaera of “detente”. Even more enthusiastic in its futilisiada passions is the ex-Trotskyists now in the Socialists Workers Party (SWP), which tries to tail simultaneously after Castro and liberal American bourgeoisie. The SWP is so caught up in the contradictions of its position that the current issue of its paper (Militant 23 May) on one page lauds Castro’s May Day speech saying good monuments to the “corrupt elements, delinquents and lumpen” and on the other page attacks Carter as a “racist” for describing the Cuban refugees in

similar terms.

For almost two decades the Spartacist tendency was unique in analyzing Castro’s Cuba as a deformed workers state. Recently some who call themselves Trotskyists — notably the French OCI of Pierre Lambert and its followers — have formally adopted this character­ ization. This is only a mask for their opposition” the symbol of the Islamic enslavement of women, as “progressive”; they have denied the of this small island — much less so than the Soviet Union. The point of backing Iran in their border war with Iraq; they have hailed as “brothers” the Pasdars — “revolutionary guards” — the hated butchers of the workers, leftists, Kurds, Arabs and other minorities. Now they have carried their criminal support to Khomeini’s “Islamic revolution” to its logical conclusion: they hail the bloody purge of leftists on the campuses and denounce as “sectarian opposition” those who try to defend their organization and their very lives from the Shi’ite clergy’s storm troopers. The SWP — like Carter over his

SWP/HKE: The blood is on your hands

Khomeini called for purge of Marxists. Leftists old injured comrade.

Reply to Intercontinental Press

"Schafer’s opus has very much a "God that Failed" quality and one is left wondering a bit of Anarchist

Babulmario. Formerly Mussolini’s mistress. Babulmario later became the lover of Lenin, too. It was not "god" that failed, though, but Babulmario.

From "Libby On the Road to Canossa" in Spartacist Canada no 42

Single copies 25 cents, order from Spartacist League, GPO Box 3473 Sydney, 2001.

June 1980

"Human Rights" crusade and defend Cuba from the attacks.

Life is hard in Cuba. It is simply not possible to achieve a socialist society of abundance and equality in the confines of this small island — much less so than for Stalin’s Russia. But the Cuban working people have won historic gains through overthrowing the Batista tyranny and expropriating the capitalists, both foreign and domestic. The Cuban masses want to defend these gains. We can well understand why they want to be rid of the US imperialists who have prostit­uted themselves to the imperialist blackmail. So do we, Dr Castro, but it will take socialist revolution to do the
When a few SWP supporters then tried to attend one of the SLL’s “public meetings” on 24 March, the Healyites predictably excluded them. And equally true to form, when the SWP comrades then protested this anti-communist attack, it also rehashed many of the classic justifications used by the Ayatollah Khomeini’s “peaceful coexistence with bourgeoisie nationalism.”

In response, Workers News then ran its “polemical” letter to the editor “from a lyceum” and accused the SWP of “anti-imperialism” and “anti-socialism”. The letter went on to claim that the SWP had “betrayed the Chinese revolution” and accused them of being “anti-imperialists and gangsterist in the guise of an anti-imperialist”.

Indeed, it could have been any leftist opponent of the Ba’athist regime, something which the colonialists no doubt appreciate.

Workers News (8 December 1979) gave a blanket defence of “theexposed” polemics, and later of others who were seeking to overthrow the regime.... That same day, Mulgrew warmly welcomed the SLL’s “anti-imperialist” rally in Sydney one “Road to Revolution”... which the SLL organises... that “we still find imperialist plots in the Arab region”, Mulgrew obligingly announced that the SWP “is completely unmasked as the most counterrevolutionary force in the Arab world”... although Workers News doesn’t mention it, an appreciative $100 cash donation was made on behalf of this same Arab Ba’athist Socialist Party.

With all its cop-baiting it is the SLL/WRP itself which is now manifestly duplicitous. Not only are they politically uncommitted to a capitalist dictatorship, but the SLL’s political corruption and “organisational gimpickry, physical gangsterism... cop-baiting... provide a fertile culture medium and suitable environment for generating masses... and the SLL has recently instigated some other tactic: a “free fire” policy this year’s May Day march in Sydney, Mulgrew directed a Healyite panel to the SLL... that “we are the Spartacist contingent in the assembly area before the march. The Printing and Kindred Industries Union contingent got the same treatment when the Healyites drove through it... Workers News (27 May) also ran an “exclusionist interview” with the mullah Mohammed Menhaj, the “representative in Australia of the Ayatollah Khomeini”, in which he was obviously pressed by the interviewer to make a clear distinction between Iranian leftists as tools of the CIA.

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Three months after being expelled from the Workers Socialist League (WSL) for its defence of the Trotskyist programme, the Leninist Faction (LF) met in joint national conference with the Spartacist League (SL) where the two organisations resolved to combine forces in the struggle for a Trotskyist party in Britain and to form the Fourth International. The deep-going character of this fusion was reflected not only in the terms of the political agreement, tested through intensive programmatic discussions and a period of joint work, but in the full role played by the comrades in debating tasks and perspectives for the fused organisation in the coming period.

After months of factional struggle by the LF (and its predecessor, the Left Tendency) over Islamic "revolution" in Iran, unprincipled manoeuvres with revisionist fake-internationals and shameless support to scabbing, the WSL leadership had only one "political" reply to these comrades — bureaucratic expulsion. The WSL's loss was Trotskyism's gain. Though substantially smaller than the Trotskyist Faction which preceded it in leaving the muddled centralism of the WSL for the independent Trotskyist path, the LF brings to our tendency a wealth of experience and tested cadre with acknowledged authority and prior histories in the International Marxist Group and the New Socialist Workers Party. The calibre of this fusion was evidenced in the election of three of the LF comrades to the Central Committee of the SL.

Speaking as co-reporter for the LF on the fusion, Comrade Mark Hyde pointed to it as further "vindication of the Trotskyist approach and defeat of revisionist sectarianism". In an obvious appeal to the Erford faction, he pointed out that this fusion was an "important upholding of our defence of the Trotskyist point of view, tested through intensive study of the politics of the Spartacist League before, during and after our expulsion from the WSL..."

The opportunities for Trotskyist regroupment through programmatic splits and fusions such as the two which have already taken place are manifold, as are the openings for principled communist intervention into the mass struggles of a highly combative working class literally fighting for survival. But the concomitant pressures towards over-extension and substitutionism — sharply amplified by the palpable defeat of British capitalism and the evident crisis of proletarian leadership — are inimical to the construction of a Leninist vanguard.

Thus the Lefties in the 1960s, as one comrade remarked, though holding a fundamentally more correct formal programme, tended away from the necessary task of political combat with the revisionists and the Labour Party and ended up catering wildly between sectarianism and opportunism before finally leaving the workers movement entirely.

Opportunities and obstacles

Befitting a gathering of the highest body of a Leninist organisation, the National Conference (and a subsequent extended plenum of the new Central Committee) devoted a good deal of attention to a critical assessment of the opportunities as well as the obstacles. The fusion was described as a part of a period of intensive and fruitful activity in which the organisation strained its modest forces to inter­sect the three-month-long steel strike. The 140 new subscribers to Spartacist Britain, at least 90 of them steel strikers, the receptivity to our propaganda among thousands of militants who had never encountered the SL's politics before — were tangible evidence of the impact of a hard communist line. The main conference resolution noted the opportunity for a breakthrough:

"Since the last national conference the organisation has made a marked advance in its capacity for effective, living communist intervention, reflected more clearly in our work around the steel strike and BL, (British Leyland), and some advance in its internal functioning. The impact of this intervention and the general political crisis affecting many of our comrades' opponents poses the possibility of significant breakthroughs in the coming period."

A number of comrades noted that the respect we had accrued from serious steel worker militants, like the modest authority gained by several BL (British Leyland) militants sympathetic to Spartacist politics during the course of the recent BL strike, could not be confused with the necessarily long and arduous struggle to establish authority as communist militants within the trade unions. The mass work fakery of the WSL and SI leads only to opportunistic betrayals and demoralisation. Likewise, as one comrade from the French section said, "I started studying the politics of the SL's before, during and after our expulsion from the WSL... But I'll tell you one thing I did know, outside the WSL, I'd two choices. One was to go out of politics and one was the Socialist League.... And we want that feeling to be reflected on the rest of the left."

The contributions of the delegations representing other sections of the International Executive Committee of the SI represented the invaluable experience of comrades coming from different national terrains — particularly given "little England" parochialism, which must necessarily have its effect even on the communist vanguard — but united around a common programme. This is in sharp contrast to the congenital and shift­ing factional disharmony of the revisionists' rotten­bloke Secretariat. Affiliation to a genuinely democratic­centralist International is crucial to combating the corrosive effects of every sort of national parochialism.

The task before our modest forces around the world is posed starkly against the backdrop of Carter's anti­soviet war drive and the threat of nuclear holocaust that hangs over humanity. Either we go forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International and national and world socialist revolution or the future holds the prospect of fascism and barbarism more terrible than ever before. Seen in this light this fusion represents a small, but real, step forward.

— reprinted from Spartacist Britain no. 21, May 1980

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June, the Iraqi Ba'athists in its vanguard? There is no question from whom the borders of Iraq supports Khomeini? Here these attacks were obvious to almost everyone. The Mujahedeen refused to consolidate the repressive apparatus of the Red Brigades and how the Palestinian PFLP has trained every terrorist organization to the Basque ETA. From the moment of his victory Khomeini has been appealing to the 55 percent of Iraq's population who are Shi'ites against the Ba'athists, who are overwhelmingly course, the Iraqi colonels are no more course, the Iraqi colonels are no more course, the Iraqi colonels are no more course, the Iraqi colonels are no more course, the Iraqi colonels are no more...
Interview with PKIU militant

"A line drawn in blood"

Individuals who had broken from Tudeh and the secular wing of the PKIU had been involved in strikes since before the nationalisation of the mines. With their nationalist program for an "imam" and Turkoman rebels against government "American puppets" as their "public enemy", they have fought alongside Kurdish "leftists" and ascribe Khomeini's "Down with the dictatorship of the shah, declared that the slogan 'Down with the dictatorship of the proletariat.'" to the ousting of the current reformist union members on the inside. They recognise the democratic vote of a "leftist" union. The use of a "leftist" union is the only way that this can be worked towards.

As in the present journalists' dispute, the "imam" on the line was being defied by quite a large number of members of the PKIU who recognise that the example of not creating such a "leftist" union is more important in many ways to the union movement than the question of the "imam" and very little news on the PKIU have come out against the "imam". The only lesson is that the PKIU is a "leftist" union. The only way that this can be worked towards.

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Murdoch, Fairfax provoke Journals’ strike

All out now!

Crush the press barons!

SYDNEY, 6 June — Picket lines went up at Sydney media moguls John Fairfax & Sons and Rupert Murdoch’s News Ltd this week as the national journalists’ strike took a militant turn in NSW. The scene resembled the bitter Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) strikes of recent years at the Melbourne dailies in 1975, at News Ltd last year, at Fairfax in 1976 and again in January this year. Militant trade unionists are once more on the streets battling it out with the av¬

iuous press barons, while company executives and strikebreaking “unionists” are crossing the picket lines to bring out the bosses’ scab rags. But this time members of the Australian Journalists’ Association (AJA) are the strikers while the traditionally militant PKIU — except for an important minority at Fairfax — is crossing their picket lines.

The NSW AJA’s decision, after three weeks on strike, to set up picket lines in an attempt to bring out the production unions and shut down the presses has brought the strike to a critical point. The workers’ militant unionism at Fairfax in particular depends on these picket lines being honoured. “One out, all out! Victory to the journalists’ strike!”

The 2000 or more journalists on metropolitan newspapers around Australia walked out on 13 May in protest at the sacking of twenty-nine subeditors — twenty-eight by Rupert Murdoch’s News Ltd and one by Fairfax — who had upheld an AJA ban on the operation of Visual Display Terminals (VDTs). For two and a half years, an AJA claim for a fifty-dollar allowance for members required to operate the VDTs had lain a-mouldering in an Arbitration Commission. On 12 May and Mr Justice Alley emerged from relative obscurity to hand down an insulting five-dollar decision in the case. When the outraged AJA immediately banded together the bosses retaliated with the sackings and the first-ever national AJA strike was on. Four weeks later, only Kerry Packer’s Consolidated Press has broken the bosses’ front by offering a thirty-dollar allowance or operational VDTs. None of these has been installed.

The workers’ unexpected militancy is transforming the AJA from an association of “committed and creative” professional journalists into something resembling a real union. They have produced strike newspapers entitled Clarion in four states and have voted to strike at a series of mass meetings. A victory by the journalists over the arrogant Murdoch and Fairfax will be immensely popular throughout the working class and particularly among militant unionists who — along with the Soviet Union — are the favourite target for these capi
talist merchants of lies.

Picket lines mean don’t cross

The Australian and the Financial Review at least are off the streets. But the mass-circulation tabloid money-spinners are still rolling out, with the bosses already reduced in size and evenasher than usual, as they are, told. They are being produced by executives, clerks, AJA members “exempt” from strike and by PKIU members who have resigned their positions and joined the picket lines outside. When the vote went the same way at a meeting of a later shift, a majority of 40 walked out. Perhaps 90 to 100 militant PKIU members, including the resigned father of the chapel Don Paget and former father Ian Jolliffe, are defying the union’s state leadership and a “democratic” vote to scab: the union “does not recognise us as out on strike”, Jolliffe told an AJA reporter. Jolliffe was seen carrying a sign saying, “Not all printers cross picket lines,” similar to the one carried by Linda Menzie (“This clerk doesn’t scab”), the only clerk to honour the PKIU picket line last January. The News Ltd printers reportedly voted unanimously to stay at work, but the militant centre of the PKIU in NSW, the Fairfax chapel, is effectively split. Unless mass picket lines can be built and the decision of the majority of the PKIU to scab reversed, militant unionism at this important plant will suffer a tragic backtrack. Only the bosses will gain.

This betrayal has been prepared by the PKIU leadership itself. For three months, the PKIU on the recommendation of all sections and levels of its leadership has been at work while militant maintenance trademen have been out on a safety issue, as reported in our last issue. There were no actual picket lines set up outside so none were crossed — but the result was the same. The PKIU turned a blind eye to staffs performing maintenance work and, except for one militant (see interview, this issue), kept working.

In contrast, the militant Fairfax metal workers, having just ended their three month strike, responded immediately to the AJA call to vote to honour the picket lines. Metal workers at News Ltd are likewise out, despite the fact that the Associated Press and News Ltd themselves in the past too. “Just because they’re scabs doesn’t make us scabs”, said one metal worker to a printer.

Why this debacle? The printers’ hostility toward the journalists is an antagonism born of watching journalists cross their picket lines. The PKIU is now learning the hard way that scabbing doesn’t pay. The main danger to their strike is that the printers will keep crossing their picket lines. Before the strike the left-liberal New Journalist (May 1980) was publishing an essay to complain of “the inevitable indignities of crossing the PKIU picket line” which “AJA members suffered last January! But the “tradition” of mutual back stabbing between the PKIU and the AJA is the bosses’ trump card, as Ian Reinecke writes in the Melbourne Journalist’s Clarion: “They tell printers that journalists are after their jobs and tell journalists that printers are a relic of the past. They sit back and watch the fray.” As the strike has progressed, rank and file journalists have begun to realise what their “sorry history” meant by watching printers go through their lines. Now the more militant journo’s on the picket lines are saying they will never cross another picket line no matter what. That’s right! No good unionist even of their own political opinions, they

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