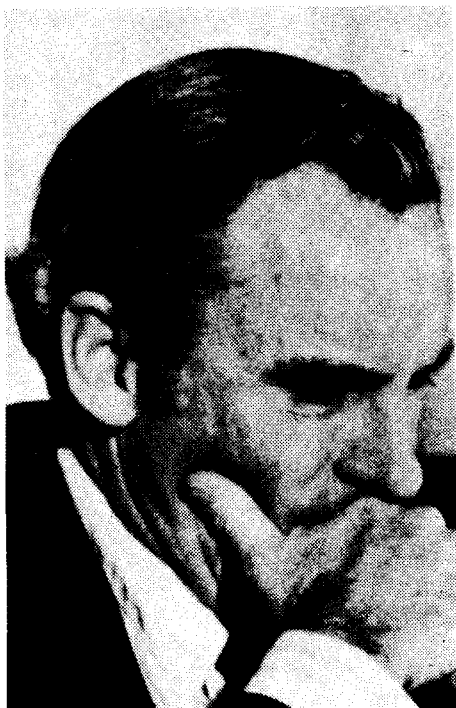




Khaki elections: B-52s target Moscow



Labor echoes Fraser



**Down with the imperialist war drive!
Defend the Soviet Union!**

Vote Labor! Oust the reformist misleaders!

4 OCTOBER — For more than 500,000 unemployed in this country, for workers, migrants, blacks or women, the outcome of the 18 October federal election promises to make precious little difference. After six years of recession-bred austerity driving down living standards, the loyal opposition to the Fraser government can offer only a paltry tax cut next year and a promise to cut the dole queues by one-fifth, with no guarantee that they will do even that if the economy goes further under. With the foreshortened campaigning descending to a level of trivia and "me-too" policies even lower than usual, election news has so far been easily overshadowed by the state of Bill Hayden and Neville Wran's voices, Prince Charles' girlfriend's see-through dress and the Rugby League and VFL grand finals — not to mention the Iran/Iraq war.

But these elections also take place in the context of a dangerous war atmos-

phere growing in Washington. In the wake of Afghanistan, as the Pentagon plans for a nuclear first-strike capacity, Malcolm Fraser has been falling all over himself trying to get strategic nuclear-armed B-52 bombers stationed in Australia. A week after he announced the voting day, Fraser leaked the news that B-52s would be based here. Coupled with the government's intensive advertising campaign to build up the Australian army reserves, it was no doubt designed to reap votes from a red-scare "khaki election". But, electoral considerations aside, Fraser is deeply committed, along with the ruling class as a whole, to being the loyal accomplice of the most deadly imperialist power on earth.

No longer the unchallenged top dog in the imperialist world, America's rulers seek to return to the days of their predominance following World War II and

they are willing to risk nuclear holocaust to do it. But today a new imperialist global conflagration would have as its target the degenerated/deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc, aiming to throw back the conquests of their collectivised property and planned economy. Thus the "Russian question" is posed pointblank: which side are you on? And the leaders of the ALP have already made it clear that they fundamentally stand on the other side. The patriotic symbolism of the ALP's flag-waving election slogan — "Raise the standard" — is a warning that, despite its cloak of small-time reforms and occasional "anti-militarist" rhetoric, these social-patriots are pro-imperialist militarists of the second mobilisation. The spectre of imperialist war underscores the urgency of politically destroying the ALP and forging a revolutionary workers party to lead the working class to the seizure of state power.

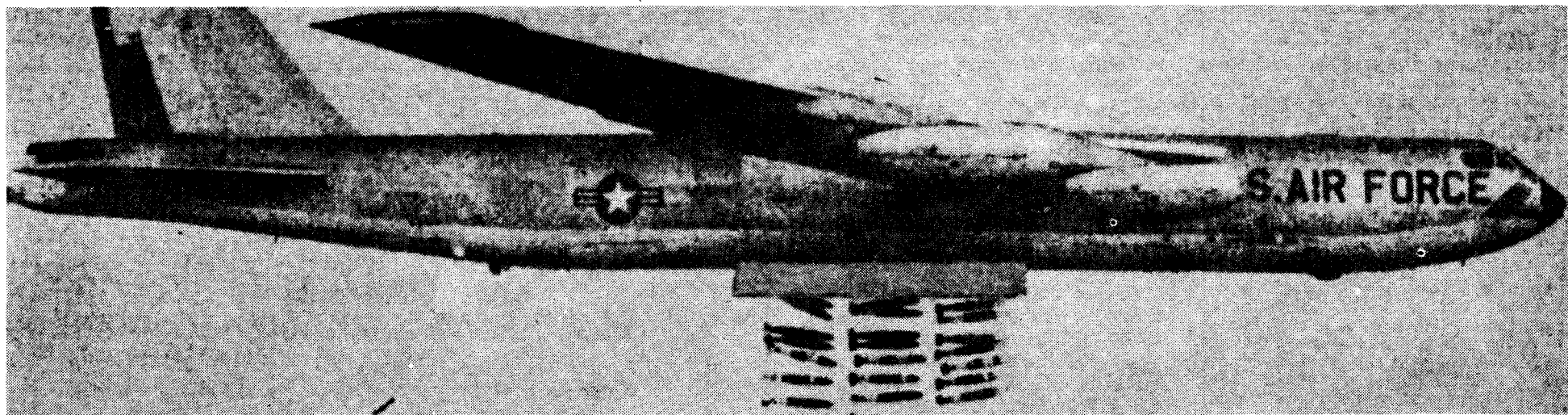
The B-52s are coming

Immediately after the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan, Fraser offered the US B-52 landing rights in Australia. The plan puts these weapons of mass

destruction hours closer to the Middle East and cuts out the need for them to fly through any other country's airspace on the way there. Each plane is additionally equipped to carry anything from some 30 tons of high explosives to 25 megaton hydrogen bombs.

To put the matter in perspective, a *National Times* report (21 September) quoted Soviet embassy official Boris Vasilov: "It's not very important, compared to some things happening in the world". Well he might say, with Carter having publicly made Brezhnev and the other Soviet leaders a special target for obliteration. Nevertheless, it is real. On 19 September, the same day as Fraser's B-52 announcement, the Pentagon announced plans to spend \$1 billion on military installations in Australia — principally to upgrade a Darwin air base and at Cockburn Sound in WA, which the Pentagon said was "top of the list" for a home port for its Indian Ocean "task force" (*Australian*, 20 September). Clearly, these strategic nuclear forces are not there just to police the Persian Gulf, and B-52s are not needed for "surveillance" of the Indian Ocean, as Washing-

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US B-52 rains down death on North Vietnamese workers and peasants, 1972. Now their target is USSR.

Poland and the left ...6

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ton blandly lied. They are part of the massive armoury aimed at the USSR.

The ALP's response? Hayden made it clear that B-52s are OK, as long as they don't carry nuclear weapons. Front-bencher Lionel Bowen's theme was that "the Australian people don't want nuclear-armed B-52s in Australia because that would make those bases a target, so our people would be at risk" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September). But these bombers wreaked wanton devastation on Indochina without using a single nuclear device. Underlying this cowardly "opposition" is the assumption that if they could get away with it without being a target for a Soviet ICBM, it would be perfectly fine — that is, if it suited the "national interest". In exactly the same way the pseudo-pacifist, isolationist rhetoric of the ALP helped prepare it to run World War II for the bosses under Curtin.

It is an insular, chauvinist fantasy to imagine that Australia can somehow stay out of a hydrogen imperialist war. In fact, Australia is already a "nuclear target", if the Soviets are doing their job, by virtue of housing integral components of the US system of ICBMs. As Brian Toohey points out in the *National Times* (21 September), communications bases like those at Pine Gap and Nurrungar in central Australia were "always part of a weapons system", linked directly to the US Strategic Air Command headquarters. They are part of an "early warning" system for the Pentagon, allowing them to unleash their nuclear warheads in the event of a Soviet missile launch. Moreover, they have played this role with the full approval and cooperation of the Labor Party, both during the Whitlam government period and ever since.

The ALP tops are themselves deeply anti-communist and anti-Soviet because they are loyal servants of the Australian ruling class. After Afghanistan, Hayden pooh-poohed Fraser's anti-Soviet boycotts because they were *ineffective*. He attacked Fraser for not spending *more* money on the military. Announcing the ALP's rejection of the Cockburn Sound proposal, Opposition "defence" spokesman Ken Wriedt reassured the Pentagon warlords that the "Labor Party broadly supported the US policy and visits by US warships to Australian ports" (*Australian*, 20 September). The ALP has even put out an election sticker with a disgusting slogan attacking Fraser from the right for not being anti-Soviet *enough*: "Malcolm's wool keeps the Russians warm". We hope Fraser's wool will help keep the Red Army soldiers warm in Afghanistan this winter, where they are mopping up reactionary gangs dedicated to butchering anyone who wants to teach girls to read and write.

Fraser has also been trying to red-bait the so-called "left wing" of the ALP as part of his "khaki election" campaign.

The *Australian* has been adding its bit too, with articles on the Victorian Socialist Left's supposed plans to "push Labor into a policy of military and foreign non-alignment" (15 September). But these "left" social democrats are far from being the pro-Russian commies Fraser and company like to pretend. On the contrary, Tom Uren, of the NSW ALP Steering Committee, who fancies himself a great friend of the Vietnamese, attacked the Liberal government for selling 900 tons of uranium yellowcake to Finland... because this would mean it will be re-processed in the USSR. "To allow Australian uranium to pass into the Soviet Union would be wholly inconsistent with the Government's policy towards the Soviet Union and the Prime Minister's statement that its action in Afghanistan represented the greatest threat to world peace since the Second World War" (*Financial Review*, 15 August).

Fortunately, the USSR can probably get all the weapons-grade material it needs without access to Australian uranium; nevertheless we, and any class-conscious worker who would like to see the gains of the October and Vietnamese revolutions preserved, declare in opposition to the anti-Soviet pacifists: send the uranium to the USSR!

Hayden: soft cop for capitalist austerity

With its faceless leader and its program of just-like-Mal-only-a-little-less-so, the ALP may well lose the election to one of the more hated politicians of recent years. The Fraser government remains a gang of vicious strikebreakers bent on destroying the fighting capacity of the unions, and plans to add still more laws, like the recently announced secret strike ballot legislation, to its mountain of anti-union statutes. Yet its unwillingness so far to do more than threaten to use this arsenal has exasperated the bosses. And Fraser's strong-arming of Olympic athletes to enforce his anti-Soviet boycott of the successful Moscow games not only failed but was widely resented.

With typical arrogance the government provoked the Queensland coal miners into a fury (which they took out, appropriately, on Fraser's snivelling Treasurer, John Howard) by trying to take away a traditional tax concession. But unlike pensioners, aboriginals, housewives and the unemployed who have been the most frequent targets of such austerity policies, the coal miners have some social power, and forced the government to substantially back down with a three-month-long strike. Despite his image as the stern patriarch, Fraser fears the power of the organised labour movement. But so do his opponents in the Labor Party. In NSW, it was Wran's cops who arrested striking workers at the Fairfax printing plant in Sydney this January and later helped smash the Gosford meat workers' picket lines.

In this election the ALP is running a particularly right-wing campaign. Having disowned the Whitlam years, the ALP today is presenting a much more "responsible" image. Concerned both to get back on the Treasury benches and to end rumours of a looming split, Hayden even promoted his arch-rival for party leadership, Bob Hawke, into the shadow Cabinet *before* the latter even got into parliament — as spokesman for "industrial relations". Look at Hawke's record as head of the ACTU, the Labor Party tells the bosses; with that capacity for selling out workers' strikes under his belt, he can be counted on to hold back the unions whereas Fraser has only provoked them.

Hayden's comment in promising to repeal the most obnoxious union-bashing laws — the IRB, CEEP, and Section 45D — was that the IRB had had two years to prove its effectiveness and that it had failed. With the Arbitration Commission becoming more and more exposed as a tool of the bosses by its indexation wage-slashing, Hayden proposes to give it a new coat of whitewash. Offering to throw workers a few crumbs in the form of a small tax cut and a few measly dollars more in family allowance for "the poor", Hayden joins Fraser in *opposing* such a

mild reform as a 35-hour week — let alone what's really needed to crack the problem of unemployment: the creation of jobs for all by sharing the work around at no loss in pay. Hayden opposes a militant struggle around such a demand because it would necessarily lead to a struggle against the decaying capitalist system itself, and would raise the possibility of the workers themselves taking power and introducing a rationally planned socialist economy.

Yet workers have been growing increasingly restive as real wages have fallen over the past five years. Shackled by a union bureaucracy which scarcely lifted a finger of resistance — letting all of Fraser's union-bashing laws get on the books without even a token fight — the working class has nonetheless staged a growing number of strikes. Coal miners have struck in NSW and Queensland; tanker drivers in Sydney struck in March against Section 45D; wool industry storemen stayed out for nine weeks over a wage claim at the start of the year, and in Victoria thousands of workers took to the streets to beat back Hamer's attempts to cut workers compensation. Now the *Financial Review* (16 September) is warning both major parties to prepare for a wages explosion next year. If Labor does win on 18 October, it will soon be confronted with an upsurge in strike activity it is pledged to hold back. And Chifley didn't need the IRB to smash the coal miners' strike in 1949; instead, he just sent in the troops. If Hayden wins, he too will use the bourgeois state to smash workers struggles. Already he has raised the spectre of a British-style "social contract" in a pact he sealed with Hawke prior to the elections. Vague and binding on no one for the moment, it remains a threat for the future.

The Australian Labor Party is a strategic obstacle to what this country really needs: a socialist revolution to put the workers in power and wipe out capitalist oppression for good. We call for a vote to Labor, the mass party of the working class, because it helps draw the class line — albeit in a partial, deformed way — against the open representatives of the bourgeoisie. A vote to Labor also helps put these reformist misleaders in office where their treachery in practice can be clearly exposed, thus furthering the struggle to split the mass base of the ALP away from the reformist tops. We want the militant workers who fought back against Fraser's union-bashing to see *for themselves* that social democracy offers nothing fundamentally different. We want to win these workers away from Laborism to the struggle for a revolutionary Trotskyist party, to the fight for a communist leadership to replace the union bureaucrats who systematically sell out workers' struggles, and to expose the ALP's repeated betrayals and destroy its stranglehold over the working class.

The fake leftists who consistently cover for the union bureaucrats or who, under rubric of "deep entry" work in the ALP, adapt wholesale to social democracy, are incapable of building such a party. After the ousting of Whitlam in November 1975 and the ensuing derailing of the movement towards a general strike to counter Kerr's action, these fake lefts extolled the ALP and "anti-Fraserism", thus helping

to *rebuild* illusions in Labor's capacity to represent the workers' objective interests. Now they are predictably clamouring for a vote to Labor while at the same time trying to push the party ever-so-slightly to the left.

For revolutionaries, however, critical support to the ALP is a *tactic*. But a "tactic" misapplied inevitably becomes a matter of principled *betrayal*. For those fake lefts who always and everywhere call for a vote to Labor, critical electoral support is not a means to destroy the ALP's influence, but its opposite — a declaration of faith in the Labor traitors. They use it to help tie workers to the treacherous ALP leaders.

For genuine Leninists, in contrast, there are times when we refuse to give critical support. Thus in the British elections of last year, our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain said "No Vote to Labour!" because of the Wilson/Callaghan government's record of vicious wage-cutting, coalitionism and strike-breaking. There our call struck a chord in the working class, militant sections of which were looking for a class-struggle alternative to the social democrats who had driven down their living standards as systematically as the Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher is trying to do now.

Fake-lefts: "two cheers for Labor"

While Ted Hill's Maoists have come out against a vote to the ALP, and are instead implicitly calling for a vote to Fraser on the grounds that "it is far preferable that there be an anti-appeasement, anti-Soviet expansionist leader" (*Vanguard*, 2 October), the rest of the fake left is dutifully closing ranks behind Hayden's ALP. But it is having trouble getting up its usual enthusiasm for turning out the vote. The anti-Soviet International Socialists (IS) — who even chimed in with Fraser's Olympic boycott call — captured the spirit with its headline in the *Battler*: "Two cheers for Labor". One was reminded of the liberal English novelist EM Forster's essay, "Two cheers for democracy". For Forster the liberal democracy of establishment Britain was good — but not quite good enough. Before he could give it three cheers, it would have to conform more to his own ideal vision of what "democracy" was. So too with the fake lefts and the ALP; what they all want is a *better* Labor Party, more in the image of their own left-sounding social-democratic program for class treachery.

The Communist Party (CPA) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) are even standing a few of their own candidates. The groups are hardly distinguishable from each other, never mind from the ALP. And no wonder, since both organisations offer only a more radical version of the Laborite program — calls for more social-democratic nationalisation schemes and utopian-reformist "tax the rich", "less guns, more butter" gimmicks. Thus Nita Keig in the SWP's *Direct Action* (24 September) tells us that "A real labor government would turn to good use the \$3.5 billion dollars [sic] currently being squandered by the Liberals on aircraft carriers and fighter

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Australasian
SPARTACIST 

Revolutionary Marxist monthly of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, section of the international Spartacist tendency, for the rebirth of the Fourth International.

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LaTrobe Uni Spartacist Club presents:

Trotskyism — The Revolutionary Marxism of Today

Wed October 15

All day: Displays, refreshments in Union Board Room.

1.00 Forum: Polish workers move.
Union Board Rm.

4.30 Women in the Class Struggle ELT 4
Film "Union Maids" followed by speaker and discussion.

7.00 Communist Student Work
A history of Spartacist Clubs at LaTrobe and Sydney Unis.
Union Board Rm.

For more information phone (03) 62-5135

Spartacists confront Hawke, Halfpenny

MELBOURNE — When Bob Hawke came electioneering to LaTrobe University on 22 September, the campus Spartacist Club was ready to take up the communist task of exposing this sellout artist. By the time he arrived to address some 600 students, everyone had a *Campus Spartacist* (abridged in this issue) nailing Hawke's and the ALP's record of betrayal. The next day's *Age* reported the spirited Spartacist protest which met him, quoting one of the placards: "Dump Hawke and Hayden! For a revolutionary leadership of the labour movement!"

"I'm a good negotiator", Hawke replied to a critical interjector during his talk on why the bosses should support a "responsible" Labor government. Jenny Stein, speaking for the Spartacist Club during the question period, got to the point: good for whom?

"You claim to be a working-class leader and you say you're good at 'negotiations'. That's right — you negotiate with the bosses and you've sold out the workers.... Are you any different from Mr Fraser, Bob Hawke? That's my question."

"Emotional nonsense", blustered Hawke. Why, he personally had intervened in the Telecom dispute in 1978, for example, where he claimed "we beat Mr Fraser" by getting the union a say in the introduction of new technology. What gall! Only a year later, this man pressured the same union into calling off work bans at Telecom, bans defending living standards against the wage-cutting indexation guidelines — exactly the outcome Fraser was trying to achieve at the time. Yes, Hawke is "different" from Fraser; Hawke has always sabotaged workers struggles from within.

The opportunist grab-bag on campus, the Socialist Left, has recently crumbled, lost "control" of its former playpen, the Student Representative Council, and now claims to be doing "activist politics and ideological work". Their "left" pretensions had been consistently exposed by the Spartacist Club's struggle to win students to a revolutionary class-struggle program (see *Australasian*

Spartacist no 77, September 1980). All the "Socialist Leftovers" could offer was the pathetic, nostalgic plea from their spokesman Paul Norton for something a little more palatable to tail: "Why cannot we expect from an elected Labor government... the sort of substantial redistribution of wealth and social reform which did characterise the Whitlam years?" What a whitewash of the government which introduced "indexation" wage cutting — as part of Labor's own austerity plans, which sunk Whitlam's meagre reforms long before he got kicked out of office in 1975!



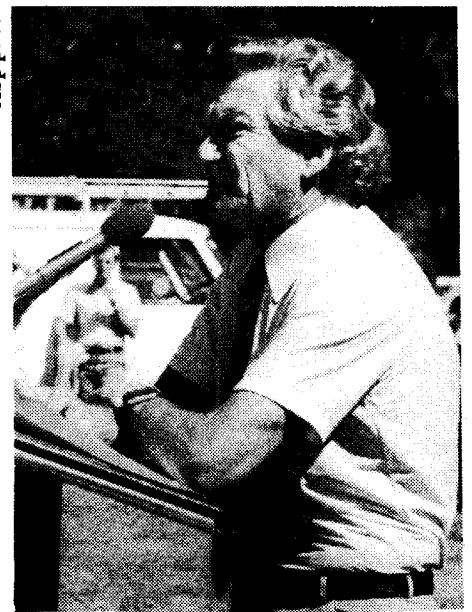
Part of Spartacist protest against traitor Hawke, Sydney Uni, 23 September.

Two days later John Halfpenny came to speak on his farcical 35-hour week non-campaign. This time the campus followers of the International Socialists filled in for the Socialist Left as loyal "left" critics. "Wouldn't it be better", whimpered one of their supporters, David Lockwood, if the metal trades officials were "more serious" and "united" for a "real campaign"? These same incompetent reformists had "opposed" Hawke by bringing out a leaflet, two days after his visit!

Again it was the Spartacist League speakers who put forward the only clear and cutting class-struggle opposition. The decisive question is the "question of leadership", Andrew Georgiou insisted:

"In the most militant strike in the last five years of Fraser rule — the LaTrobe Valley power workers' strike which lasted 12 weeks — John Halfpenny played a role in strangling that strike. Because not only did he refuse to call on the workers to close down the whole power industry, he also told the workers to go to the arbitration system. And if he thinks the IS are some sort of revolutionaries he is mistaken — they agreed with him on that."

ASp photo



Bob "bump me into parliament" Hawke at Sydney Uni.

workers". Contrary to these cheap lies, we've been involved, all right — fighting against Halfpenny's sellouts, as he well knows. In the LaTrobe Valley in 1977, the Spartacist leaflet "Reject the sellout" struck a chord amongst the angry power workers, which earned us the particular venom of Murdoch's red-baiting press as well as Halfpenny's enmity. Spartacist supporters walked the picket line at Everhot and called for enforcing it and extending the strike, while Halfpenny set about sabotaging this fight to defend jobs.

SYDNEY — Hawke hit Sydney University the day after LaTrobe, to be met by a militant campus Spartacist Club contingent chanting: "Smash the bosses army, smash the bosses state — Build a workers army, build a workers state!" The newly formed Left Action (?) Group (LAG) on campus — a warmed-over version of the old CPA-dominated Broad Left clot — had refused to join our protest and were conspicuously silent during the talk. It was left to Neil Flormirell of the Spartacist Club to draw the connection between Hawke's sellouts and the ALP's pro-imperialist stance:

"There are a hell of a lot of workplaces, and factories, such as the LaTrobe Valley, Philip Morris, where he doesn't dare show his face. That's because he has a consistent record of selling out workers strikes, and I put it to you that that's because he wants to run the bosses' state. And nothing could better show that than his... campaign, alongside Fraser's war minister, Killen, in helping recruit to the civilian 'defence' forces, helping to build both Carter and Fraser's war drive against the Soviet deformed workers state. I say

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Bob Hawke: Labor "saviour" for capitalism

We reprint below an abridged version of the leaflet distributed by the LaTrobe University Spartacist Club when Bob Hawke spoke at the campus on 22 September.

Robert James Lee Hawke, the "Mr Fixit" of labour disputes, is coming to LaTrobe today. Hawke, the only working voice in the ALP's new leadership troika, is talking on "Mal-adjustments in our society", the horrors of Fraser and Liberal Party rule. And there'll be no surprises in that. But our question is — what different do Hawke and the ALP offer?

We don't begrudge Hawke his beer drinking. Our objection is fundamental — the man is a traitor to the working class.... Remember the viciously fought strike at Philip Morris last year where the management used dogs and hoodlums against strikers? How during the strike Hawke had his chauffeur drive straight through a line of Philip Morris workers distributing leaflets at the Marlboro Open tennis championships, then watched the tennis with a Philip Morris director. Or the 1977 La Trobe Valley power strike that had the potential to take the lead in rolling back the indexation wage freeze and anti-union laws. It was Hawke, and his lieutenant John Halfpenny, who engineered the return to work and Arbitration.

Lots of people hate Hawke. The ALP

Socialist Left faction hate him because they know Hawke is ruthless and ambitious enough to carry out his promise to drive their watery leftism right out of the Labor Party. Their answer: cuddling up to the ALP right wing against Hawke's Centre-Unity Faction. For all the eco-faddists and their fake-left waterboys Hawke's real crime is his "accepting reality" pro-uranium position. But on the key question they and Hawke agree — the Soviet Union shouldn't have nuclear weapons. The "Keep uranium in the ground" crowd conveniently ignore the very real anti-Soviet war drive of the imperialists — Reagan and Carter are right now vying for first-strike capacity against the Soviets. Labor says it will not accept B-52s with nuclear weapons... for the present. But when push comes to shove, the Labor reformists will line up with their own bourgeoisie against the USSR. We say: military defence of the Soviet Union against the imperialists!...

In Wills, Hawke's electorate, his support for the Zionists flushed out some real vermin. In a 5 July issue of the gutter rag *Truth* the pathological Nazi, Ross "Skull" May, announced he would run against Hawke. May said he would be relying on the "hate ticket", that Hawke was really Jewish. As yet May has not nominated. But the very possibility is an outrage. Remember these twisted little Hitler-lovers are standing against Hawke

because he's a union leader and a "Jew lover".

So we have a question for you, Mr Hawke. Do you intend to let these creeps openly parade about, spewing out their racist, labour-hating filth? To your electorate, overwhelmingly comprised of working-class migrants, this is an outrage and a provocation. We think we already know the answer. You will say May is "irrelevant", the "democratic process" will prove they have no support. And you won't get much opposition from your "socialist" electoral opponents, the Communist Party (CPA)'s Phil Herington or the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)'s Sol Salby. The SWP, for example, are already on record as supporters of "free speech for fascists" — a program for labour suicide....

There is nothing to debate with these labour-hating racist terrorists.... *Massive mobilisations by organised labour is the only way to smash the fascists.*

That workers' illusions in reformism are still mostly intact is the responsibility of the opportunist left. When Whitlam was thrown out by Kerr in 1975 it was Hawke who told outraged workers to "cool it". The ALP "left" were right behind him then. The CPA through bureaucrats like (now ex-member) Halfpenny helped derail workers' anger and the possibility of a real general strike to roll back these attacks into a four-hour protest stoppage. Since then every fake

leftist has been selling "anti-Fraser unity" and waffling on about Labor "with socialist policies" to cover their support for ALP reformism....

In these elections the Spartacist League gives critical support to the ALP as the mass workers party against the open parties of the bourgeoisie. But there should be no illusions: Hayden/Hawke/Wran will give us little different than Fraser. Disowning the paltry reformist idealism of the Whitlam period, the ALP promises only "safer" administration for the bosses. Critical electoral support to Labor is no principle, however. It is a tactic to crack workers' illusions in parliamentary reformism. Put misleaders in government and see how they operate. We seek to build class-struggle opposition in the labour movement to split the Labor Party, to win the best elements to communism.

Real power in this society is not in the parliamentary playpens whether it's Canberra or its pathetic campus miniature, the SRC. It's in the boardrooms of the banks and the corporations. And the real power to change this society is not through the ballot box but in the social power of the organised working class — if it has a fighting class-struggle leadership. That is our task. Join us in this fight!

NOT THE BOSSES' PARLIAMENT BUT A WORKERS GOVERNMENT! ■

Class-struggle candidate in San Francisco elections Enough! It's time for a workers party!

Members and sympathisers of the Spartacist League/US (SL) in San Francisco recently greeted with pleasure the opportunity to sponsor a genuine socialist union militant, Diana Coleman, as candidate for supervisor (similar to city councillor) in the November 4 city elections. A Spartacist Party Campaign Committee to support Coleman has been formed, adopting as its central campaign slogan, "Enough! It's Time for a Workers Party!"

In an interview with *Workers Vanguard*, fortnightly paper of the SL, Coleman stated, "... Our campaign will hit the real issues facing workers — depression, the threat of war against the Soviet Union, the rightward turn taken by bourgeois politicians in this country that has encouraged the growth of fascist groups like the Nazis and the Klan.

"Just last Saturday night [14 September] 400 attended the first Klan rally in Connecticut in 70 years. Two weeks ago dozens of KKKers in full regalia patrolled an NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] march under police protection right across the bay in Richmond, California, and then last week ... swastikas were painted and a bomb threat was phoned to stop the opening of a Jewish play in Los Angeles. The same night windows were smashed at a Jewish bookstore on Geary Street here in San Francisco ... I represent a program and a strategy to chase these murdering fascists back in their holes.

"We showed how to do it in San Francisco last April 19. When the Nazis threatened a public celebration of Hitler's birthday ... it was the Spartacist League that initiated the April 19 Committee Against Nazis (ANCAN) ... I worked



Diana Coleman at her union convention, 1978.

with ANCAN to build the united-front rally of 1200 trade unionists, gays, blacks, Jews, Asian-Americans, Latinos and socialists that occupied the intended site of the Nazi demonstration and prevented it from taking place.

"A vote for me is a vote for that strat-

egy ... to unite all the different sectors of poor and working people in San Francisco behind the labor movement to stop fascist terror groups and fight for labor's interests. My campaign will be a small but important step toward breaking labor from the capitalist parties and building a mass workers party."

The first labour group to support Coleman's candidacy was the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) in Local 9410 of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) which considers Diana, a former caucus member, as something of a favourite daughter. They voted that "We are delighted to have a real workers candidate with a class-struggle program to vote for in the San Francisco elections. The MAC enthusiastically endorses the Spartacist candidate Diana Coleman for Board of Supervisors. Activity in support of her campaign will be a major focus of MAC work until the November elections."

It's been so long since a real labor-socialist has run for election in San Francisco calling for a workers party that when Coleman spoke to the Central Labor Council (CLC), on September 11, the CLC president noted: "We heard of all that stuff from Eugene Debs, but it never worked." But unlike Debs and the old Socialist Party we mean a workers party that fights for proletarian state power.

The CLC candidate interviewing committee listened with interest when the president asked Coleman, "What do you think of the Polish workers strike?" She

replied, "That's a very good question. Many of the workers demands are justified. They're talking about mine safety, they're talking about trade unions independent of the Stalinist bureaucracy, but I want to see trade unions stand on some kind of socialist basis. If you're asking me if I stand for the Polish Catholic church, one of the most reactionary forces in the world, I don't. And I'm opposed to any kind of lash-up where the Polish Catholic church is trying to get NATO intervention in Poland to restore capitalism. I stand for a socialist Poland and workers democracy."

Coleman is running against Carter-Reagan-Anderson and their imperialist drive for war against the Soviet Union. Indeed, she's the only candidate anywhere in the country who is making an issue out of defending the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

Diana Coleman is a fighter on the side of the working class. Her first political act was to demonstrate on the city hall steps to drive the witchhunting House Un-American Activities Committee out of town in 1960. She went to Mississippi in 1965 to do civil rights work, was a prominent Bay Area anti-war activist, a leader of Oakland Women's Liberation and has been a union militant for ten years, six of them in the CWA. She is a supporter of the Spartacist League and is well-known in the San Francisco labour movement as an organiser for the April 19 Committee Against the Nazis.

Coleman is running against a field of strikebreaking Democratic Party politicians who are labour-haters in a labour town. The working population of San Francisco is ruled by a city government that cut wages of city craft workers in

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Smash the Ku Klux Klan!

The following letter was sent by an SL supporter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in response to an article in the 20 September issue headlined, "Ain't nothin' you can do but join the Klan". The article was a sympathetic sociological portrayal of members of the racist Ku Klux Klan. Its message was that these fascist scum are just ordinary downtrodden folk, "a certain kind of man in a certain kind of world". One even expresses sympathy for the "exploited and mistreated" American Indians! The letter points out what the KKK really stands for and how to fight it. The *SMH* has so far refused to print it.

The letter the SMH wouldn't print

23 September, 1980
To the editor:

I would like to express my utter outrage at the appearance of Guy Martin's uncritical piece on the Ku Klux Klan on page one of the "Good Weekend". As a resident of Australia, and the daughter of a union truck driver from Cleveland, Ohio, I can tell you that the working people of America, both black and white, have just one word for the Klan — scum!

The Klan is raising its ugly head again, including in the industrial cities of the North. It may attract kill-crazy lunatics warped almost beyond human recognition by capitalist society and its wars (Vietnam), but the Klan is nothing more or less than a band of cold-blooded, racist murderers — whom your paper portrayed sympathetically as "victims" of society. What about the Klan's victims?

You called the KKK's murder of five leftists in Greensboro, North Carolina a "shootout"! This baseless lie only helps let the killers go free. The *Herald* did not reprint the eyewitness account in the prominent New York weekly, *Village Voice*, of 26 May 1980 — which shows clearly how half a dozen Nazis and Klansmen, in obvious collusion with the cops and with no provocation, "methodically" took weapons from their car and opened fire on a demonstration that was forming up. The five killed in cold blood were long-time civil rights activists, and trade-union organisers attempting to unionise nearby plants. They were not picked at random!

The guns of the KKK are aimed at blacks, Catholics and Jews, and all trade unionists and socialists. These millions either are now or will be the real victims of Klan terror, as long as it is allowed to grow and continue spreading its filth, to which your paper seems to have no objection. The Klan and the Nazis must be stopped, and in at least two northern cities in the US recently, hundreds of blacks and working people did just that. Why hasn't the *Herald* reported the rally of 500 black car workers and others in Detroit shortly after the Greensboro massacre, which stopped a threatened Klan march in that city; or the labour rally of 1200 in San Francisco that kept the Nazis from celebrating Hitler's birthday? Both, of these rallies were heavily built by the Spartacist League, the Trotskyist group which, uniquely on the left, fights for mass labour/black mobilisations and defence to crush Nazi and Klan vermin now.

Australian working people, migrants and other minorities should be outraged as well — any success for the KKK in America makes a similar development

here all the more possible and likely. Just as Hitler's Nazis slaughtered Jews and the KKK in America seeks genocide for blacks, here Asian migrants will be the chief scapegoat/victims of an anti-labour fascist terror with "white

Australia" as its slogan. You don't have to be a Spartacist supporter as I am to see that unionists, minorities and socialists had better make sure it doesn't happen here.

Rita Sutherland



16 October 1pm, Carlaw Lecture Theatre 10, Sydney University
17 October 7.30pm, Carlaw Lecture Theatre 10, Sydney University
23 October, 1pm, Central Lecture Block 3, New South Wales University

Presented by the Spartacist League.

With the 4 November US presidential election barely a month away, a dangerous war atmosphere is building up in the Pentagon, the White House and on the campaign trails. Not since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis has there been such open and official talk from Washington about winning a nuclear war. On the eve of the Democratic convention in August word was "leaked" that Carter had formally adopted nuclear war plans long advocated by military hardliners, previously known as "counterforce strategy". Presidential Directives 58 and 59 envisage fighting a "prolonged but limited nuclear war", aiming to knock out the entire Soviet strategic missile force and train the cross hairs on the USSR's political and military leaders (*New York Times*, 6 August).

Waving their ten-gallon hats like Slim Pickens riding an H-bomb to glory in *Dr Strangelove*, the presidential contenders, Democrat Jimmy Carter and Republican Ronald Reagan, are calling each other out as the fastest nuclear triggers in the West. In the long-gone days of "fail safe", only a madman could unleash nuclear war, we were assured. But now two madmen are running for commander-in-chief of the world's deadliest imperialist power, each trying to outdo the other in threatening atomic holocaust. The reasons go well beyond considerations of short-term electoral advantage. While the American army was being ignominiously routed by the North Vietnamese in Indochina, the USSR was able to substantially catch up with the West in numbers of ICBMs. Now America's rulers seek to reverse their humiliating decline, regain global nuclear superiority over the USSR that they may return to the post-World War II days when they could throw their weight around with nuclear blackmail. The official policy of the US government for over a decade has been to secure first-strike capacity, the ability to destroy the Soviet nuclear arsenal so that imperialism could dictate its terms with the threat of annihilating Russia's peoples and industry.

Soviet Communist party leader and number one Washington murder target Leonid Brezhnev said that the purpose of the US directive on "controlled" nuclear war was to "make the idea of nuclear war sort of acceptable to public opinion" while *Pravda* warned that it meant turning West Europe into a "radioactive desert". *New York Times* columnist Flora Lewis noted, "Moscow could feel it had reason to fear a US first strike and decide to launch in anticipation of such a strike." And, as she put it, Carter is demanding "the choice of liquidating the enemy's leadership". How does he expect the Russians to react to this one? Has he never seen the *Godfather* movies?

Will they or won't they?

The US' now-explicit "hard-target counterforce" strategy has been made possible by the new mobile MX missile, 200 of which (with ten warheads apiece) are to be made invulnerable to attack through an elaborate 4,600-mile underground "racetrack" in Nevada and Utah, costing over \$100 billion. The only conceivable target for these 2000 warheads is the Soviet ICBM fleet (presently estimated to be 1400 missiles) in their silos; thus, their only value is for a *first strike*.

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Two right-wing capitalist yahoos are running for the top job of US imperialism, but the Spartacist League/US is fighting for a revolutionary workers party to sweep their class away for good. Now in the midst of a subscription drive, *Workers Vanguard* is more than the hard-hitting, class-struggle fortnightly of our US comrades. It speaks out forcefully on every crucial issue worldwide with unparalleled Trotskyist reporting and analysis. **Now is the time to subscribe!**

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Carter/Reagan nuclear war fever

A nuclear first strike by either side had previously been considered "unthinkable" given the mutual capacity of the US and the USSR to totally destroy each other — a strategic doctrine aptly labeled MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction). But the US warhawks are planning the "unthinkable". Their calculated destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — not so much the last explosions of World War II as the first shots of the Cold War/hot war against the USSR — showed that they are ready and willing to push the button. Truman contemplated it in 1951

The Republican platform with its double-speak watchwords "Family, Neighborhood, Work, Peace, Freedom" and Reagan's campaign promises amount to a declaration of war against the poor, the working class and the blacks. Reagan recently hailed the genocidal Vietnam war as a "noble cause" and feels compelled to tell campaign audiences "I am not trigger happy" — because everyone knows he is, out of deep conviction! There are those who try to treat him as a bad joke or a media phenomenon, recalling that only a few decades ago he was

ism. But a social system in decline gets the first families it deserves. The crisis of leadership of the US bourgeoisie is increasingly worrying its reluctant European "allies", who fear that "you Americans may trade a bunch of incompetents for a bunch of nuts" (*Wall Street Journal*, 3 June).

There is a perilous continuity between the development of right-wing populism and the increased growth and visibility of fringe fascism represented by the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis. While Reagan



Carter (left), Reagan (right): Oh, shit!

over Korea, Eisenhower's National Security Council discussed it in 1954 over Vietnam and Kennedy threatened it over Cuba in 1962. Today National Security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski blusters that "our decision makers will not shrink from using American power . . ." (interview with *New York Times*, 30 March). The US presidential hopefuls' nuclear war fever poses even more sharply than before that the choice now is either proletarian revolution or irradiated barbarism.

"I am not trigger happy" — Reagan

What is new and most dangerous in the US political situation is that the bourgeoisie has reestablished a political base for aggressive militarism. First came Carter's "human rights" crusade against the Soviet Union, then the chauvinist furore over the Teheran hostages seizure and US threats over the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan created the Cold War climate for the biggest weapons buildup since 1945. Carter/Brzezinski's Cold War drive against the USSR has made Reagan's right-wing Republicanism respectable and given it its battle-cries.

once upstaged by a chimpanzee in the movie *Bedtime for Bonzo*. But this anti-communist fanatic is dangerous because his inflamed rhetoric could easily become reality should he be elected. And he will not just crusade against the Russians abroad, but look for an opportunity to make scapegoats of the left at home.

The election comes at a time when the US economy is plunging into what is probably the greatest depression since the 1930s. A remarkable consequence of the bankruptcy of Carter and the Democrats is that, in comparison, even Reagan can appear as the saviour of the economy and the working man. Thus for the first time, public opinion polls indicate that more trade unionists think that a right-wing Republican has the best economic program; at least Reagan promises a tax cut — supposedly to be by 30 per cent over three years. He also promises dramatically increased military expenditure and a balanced budget. To finance this, and also solve all US capitalism's economic ills, Reagan has a simple answer: growth! This is like prescribing "life" to a dying man or "sleep" to an insomniac.

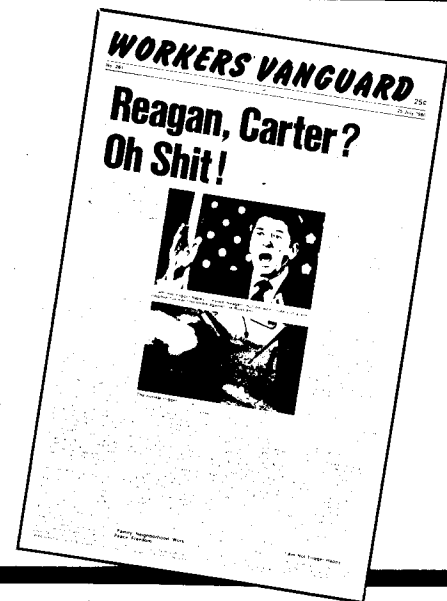
With its traditional base turning on it, at least for the moment, the Democratic Party is in deep crisis. Even the Republicans, the traditional party of US big business, are the beneficiary of a protest vote against Carter's Democrats. In better times for the Democrats, the "Billygate" affair — the revelations of the president's brother's sordid business dealings with the Libyan dictator Qaddafi — would not have amounted to much. Instead it engulfed Carter in yet another disastrous episode of mean-minded, short-sighted incompetence, and his popularity plummeted below even Richard Nixon's all-time low at the time of Watergate.

The most striking thing about the "Billygate" affair is the long look it offers at the third-rate, bizarre personalities of those to whom decaying imperialism has entrusted power. Even the big bourgeoisie must be getting tired of the Nixons, Carters and Reagans, these "self-made" men with their small-time financial schemes and small-town moral-

is no fascist, standing merely on the right wing of the mainstream of the bourgeois parliamentary spectrum, the Cold War climate and the racist backlash encouraged by the Democrats have handed the Klan and the Nazis a respectability they haven't had in years. But while the fascists have stepped up their increasingly brazen provocations and for example a Klansman, Tom Metzger, gained the Democratic nomination for a southern California congressional district, they have not gone unchallenged. The way to crush them in the egg was shown by the San Francisco April 19th Committee Against the Nazis (ANCAN) initiated by the Spartacist League of the US, which built a 1200-strong labour-centred demonstration to successfully prevent the Nazis celebrating Hitler's birthday last April. Now the Spartacist League is endorsing a prominent ANCAN activist, Diana Coleman, in the San Francisco city elections around the slogan "Enough! Its time for a workers party!" (see accompanying article).

This slogan expresses the fundamental task of proletarian revolutionaries in the United States; not to pressure the Democrats into replacing Carter by a "real liberal" such as Ted Kennedy but to *break* the ties binding the working class to the capitalist parties. For decades the Democratic Party has been the preferred vehicle of the American version of the popular front, with the treacherous union bureaucrats tying the workers to their bosses' political machine. But from a class perspective there is no lesser evil.

The only real alternative is to fight for a workers party and a workers government to expropriate the exploiters and disarm the imperialist nuclear warmongers. It is to this fight that the Spartacist League/US is dedicated. The 1980 US presidential elections may offer no choice. But there is still a choice for those dedicated to social justice and the emancipation of the oppressed: fighting for the forging of a party of the working class to lead all of the oppressed to a socialist future. ■



"Poland: A Workers Victory" hailed the liberal *Newsweek* (8 September). "Poland! A victory for genuine socialism and workers everywhere" echoed the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)'s *Direct Action* (3 September). The coincidence was not accidental. For over recent weeks there has been a remarkable consensus over the Polish workers' strikes. The Pope prayed for them. Leaders of the imperialist countries from Australia's Malcolm Fraser to Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan to West Germany's reactionary Franz Josef Strauss — all labour-hating, anti-communist bourgeois politicians — supported them. Through the pro-capitalist labour bureaucracy from Hawke's ACTU executive to the Cold War warriors of the American AFL-CIO to the entire fake left, excepting only the Kremlin-loyal Stalinists, the Polish strikes received uncritical and enthusiastic acclamation. Only the international Spartacist tendency noted that the crisis in Poland was heading toward an explosion which could "bring either proletarian revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy or capitalist counter-revolution by Pope Wojtyla's church." While the fake left hailed the strike settlement as a victory for the working class, we said:

"Insofar as the settlement enhances the Polish workers' power to struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, revolutionaries can support the strike and its outcome. But only a blind man could fail to see the gross influence of the Catholic church and also pro-Western sentiments among the striking workers. If the settlement strengthens the working class organisationally, it also strengthens the forces of reaction. Poland stands today on a razor's edge."

— "Polish workers move", *Australasian Spartacist* no 77, September 1980.

The Polish Stalinist bureaucracy cannot live with this settlement. Trade unions independent of state control are in fundamental contradiction to the total monopolisation of governmental power necessary for Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The economic concessions to the workers can only tighten the noose of economic strangulation and indebtedness to the Western bankers. And as both contenders for the US presidency beat the drum for an anti-Soviet war drive, the Catholic Church in Poland has further consolidated and legitimised its place as the institutionalised opposition in Poland. The implementation of the strikers' demand for church access to the media through the recent broadcasting of Sunday mass on state-controlled TV is a victory for the necessarily restorationist Polish Pope, John Paul Wojtyla and his Vatican mafia.

For Trotskyists, whose struggle to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies is based on unconditional defence of the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialism, there can only be war to the death between the two programs of workers political revolution and social counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc. The capitalist media has gleefully played up every example of church influence, Polish nationalism and pro-Western sentiment. Strike leaders like Lech Walesa and Anna Walentynowicz, both devout Catholics, have become overnight heroes in the Western press. Social-democratic dissidents like Jacek Kuron they have taken to heart like one of their own. They too smell the possibilities in the wind. "Free trade unions"? Catholic, socialist, to fight for what? "Democracy"? Yes, but what class? These questions must be answered by revolutionaries who seek to head the upsurge in Poland in the direction of socialism and combat reactionaries who would exploit the justified grievances of the Polish masses to create a mass base for counter-revolution.

But for ostensible Trotskyists internationally, for both the US Socialist Workers Party and European Mandeliste wings of the United Secretariat (USec), and its various centrist satellites like the British International Communist League (I-CL), these contradictory considerations are alien. They ignore, play down, or just rationalise the ominous presence of

Why they whitewashed clerical reaction

Poland

and

the left

Wojtyla's Catholic Church because they deny there is any danger of counterrevolution in Poland.

There is a context for such wilful deceit. These are the people who cheered every "dissident" from the tsar-loving Solzhenitsyn to the traitor Shcharansky who passed Soviet defence secrets to the US. To a man these leftists said Carter's "human rights" campaign was just "hypocrisy"; they denied it was ideological preparation for imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union. Then the Soviets crossed the border into Afghanistan. The tidal wave of anti-Soviet hysteria it unleashed blew apart their Trotskyist pretensions. Even those who didn't outright join the imperialist hullabaloo about "self-determination"

other. In the midst of anti-Soviet vituperation against the Stalin-Hitler pact and over the Soviet invasion of "poor little Finland" these renegades deserted their posts and split. As they stampeded out they too were shouting, "The Soviet Union? It's not the issue." But it is, then and today. Defence of workers' gains against reactionary attack is the starting point for revolutionists. Shachtman's desertion from defencism into "third camp" theories and "democracy versus totalitarianism" thinking led him to support the Bay of Pigs US invasion of Cuba in 1961. And today, the fake Trotskyists are not far removed at all from full-fledged third-campism. Already the British USec group, the International Marxist Group (IMG) brings out a joint



Lech Walesa, head of Gdansk strike committee, brandishes money from Austrian unions.

and "Soviet aggression" were unanimous on one point: defence of the USSR was "not the issue". Polish workers are more palatable than Afghan mullahs and landlords as a cover for deserting Soviet defencism and crossing the bridge into the camp of social democracy. Poland is bringing it all home.

Defence of the Soviet Union was the central question of the 1939-40 faction fight between Trotsky and James P Cannon's SWP on the one hand against the revisionist tendency led by James Burnham and Max Shachtman on the

publication, *Labour Focus in Eastern Europe*, with the state-capitalist SWP of Tony Cliff. *Labour Focus* is so anti-Soviet that it printed without criticism calls for boycotting the Moscow Olympics, a fact which prompted the resignation of Tamara Deutscher from the journal's list of sponsors. It even endorsed the formation of the Pilsudskiite, anti-Semitic, Catholic nationalist KPN.

Anti-Sovietism is of course nothing new to the Cliffites. The Australian version of these "third camp" social democrats, the International Socialists



Workers shook Stalinist regime, but kneeled for

(IS), have chalked up some pretty despicable acts this year alone — blocking with Nazi Ross May and Captive Nations types to protest the Soviet presence in Afghanistan; initially calling for a boycott of the Olympics, then protesting what they called "Moscow's propaganda fest" during the Games themselves. So it was no surprise that they couldn't care less about the reactionary danger of the Catholic Church, uncritically acclaiming the Polish strike as a "magnificent struggle against capitalism" (*Battler*, 6 September). "Capitalism"? What the IS don't explain is just what sort of capitalist class it is that buys food dear from the peasants then sells it cheap to the workers, "accumulating" in the process not capital but ... a \$19 billion foreign debt.

Their idiotic "theory" of state capitalism is in fact a flimsy cover for their capitulation to imperialist anti-Sovietism. A mishmash of Stalinophobia and workerism, it appeals to a gut-level economism: the capitalists in the West cut wages; so do the Polish bureaucrats; therefore, they too must be capitalists. But for Marxists, the class character of the Polish state is determined by the fact that it defends collectivised property in the means of production: it is a proletarian state, though deformed by bureaucratic misrule, and must be defended against imperialist or capitalist-restorationist forces. Yet that is exactly what the IS refuses to do.

SWP — What church? Oh, that church

In their race to present themselves as the "anti-Stalinist" supporters of the Polish workers, the SWP here immediately had to start denying reality. In their initial reports the Catholic Church was not so much as mentioned. Bourgeois support for the strikers was put down to hypocrisy while Nita Keig flatly denied any possibility of counterrevolution: "... there is no clamouring for a return to capitalism in Poland today. There is only a struggle for a more democratic socialism ..." (*Direct Action*, 3 September). But the class enemy is not stupid. Fraser, Carter/Brzezinski and Poland's Catholic hierarchy want counterrevolution in Poland, and "free" trade unions and the dissidents' call for "pluralist democracy" are the classless codewords they see as an opening. For the social-democratic SWP there is no class line in Poland, just more "democracy".

Eventually even the SWP had to admit that twice-daily mass and pictures of John Paul II all over the Gdansk shipyards signified something. So they played their Iran card. Remember Iran? Religion and the mullahs were "irrelevant" there



ed for Pope Wojtyla's church.

too. Now they support Khomeini as the "symbol" of the "revolution". What's next — "we don't support the Pope, he's just a symbol for a democratic, anti-totalitarian revolution"? According to the 17 September *Direct Action* religion for the strikers "was just an individual question". Yeah, like Lech Walesa who throws around photos of the "Queen of Poland" Virgin Mary at strike meetings; who, after the strike, had a private mass and confession with Cardinal Wyszynski, Wojtyla's agent in Poland. This is the Wyszynski who, at a gathering of 150,000 pilgrims in Czestochowa during August, recalled the 1920 victory of the bourgeois reactionary Pilsudski over Lenin and Trotsky's Red Army — a victory hailed by the faithful as "the miracle on the Vistula"!

Two weeks later the SWP admitted the church was really there, only to give it a free pass into the "opposition". Their article "Polish Workers and the Church" (*Direct Action*, 1 October) began,

"What do Marxists think about the demand made by the strikers in Poland that all religious groups be given access to the media? We support this demand."

What this means is that the Catholic Church will have a state-provided mouthpiece for its medieval mysticism, bigotry and superstition; and a legitimisation for its capitalist restorationist appetites. The separation of church and state was a democratic demand, and has been since the bourgeoisie first began its struggle against feudalism. Its reverse, in a workers state, is profoundly anti-democratic. Even "left" ALP Steering Committee member Peter Baldwin was able to score a point against these fake Trotskyists by pointing out "this organisation [the church] has little interest in the establishment of worker's states, deformed or otherwise" (*Challenge*, 9 September). Right — but neither has Baldwin's ALP. And he too hailed the strike settlement as "an unprecedented breach of the totalitarian order".

The SWP says it's all just a question of "religious freedom" — but they understand what they're doing. "Only experience with the role of the church hierarchy in the class struggle will convince the Polish working masses of its fundamentally reactionary anti-working class outlook", the SWP writes. Well, it's probably true that the experience of a bloody counterrevolution which drowns the Polish workers in blood would convince the Polish masses not to place their trust in the church. With the same sort of reasoning the SWP defends "free speech for fascists". But it is the antithesis of a revolutionary program to advocate clerical counterrevolution or fascist holocaust for their "educational" value!

What of the SWP's centrist factional opponents in the USec, the followers of

Ernest Mandel? In the past they always managed to distance themselves from the SWP's open reformism. But Afghanistan and now Poland have brought the imperialist "human rights" campaign home, and the "left" verbiage has cancelled out. Initially the British IMG paralleled Tony Cliff's Russia-hating SWP on Afghanistan — both called for "Soviet troops out". The IMG has been publicly discussing liquidating into the much larger SWP for almost a year now. Poland could be the place where they get down to talking business.

And the threat of counterrevolution? This is Mandel's former star section, the French LCR, earlier this year, "So when the Polish oppositionists push the slogan, 'Down with the government', we support them even if they are looking for a return to a private economy, because a mass movement capable of bringing about this goal [toppling the government] will never allow the factories to be returned to their former bosses" (*Rouge*, 1 February 1980). Amazing! These renegades will support even an openly restorationist movement — all in the name of the "dynamic"!

No different is the International Communist League, a group of parochial and rightward moving British centrists, now deeply ensconced in the Labour Party, but who still like to dabble on the fringes of the USec. As such, it is not particularly noteworthy among many such groups on the European left. But in Australia, it is looked to by centrist-windbag types like Paul White and Janet Burstall, who run clandestine "study circles" in Melbourne and Sydney respectively, and aspire to bigger and better things. The I-CL-backed deep entry organ into the British Labour Party, *Socialist Organiser* (30 August), headlined the Polish events "Birth of our Power" in a workerist identification with the strikers. Not a word about defensism. Any counterrevolutionary threat disappears into talk of a "Holy Alliance" of Stalinist bureaucrats, Western bankers and the church against the workers. "The Church far prefers its cosy relationship with the bureaucracy to the uncertainties of the revolutionary storm which is brewing", they tell us.

Only, that is, until it sees a chance that counterrevolution might succeed. The idea that the church (and Western bankers) are four-square behind the Soviet bloc bureaucracy is a "state-cap" myth. A temporary coincidence of interests, perhaps, but in spite of the Stalinists' treachery there is the "little matter" of the class line that separates them from the capitalist ideologues and businessmen. In the same issue of *Socialist Organiser* the state-capitalist assumptions are made explicit — "in Poland both class and national oppression are a reality" (our emphasis). The same article concludes,

"If the cause of socialism is not to be completely discredited in Eastern Europe,

British socialists must give their unconditional support to the Polish working class in its present difficult struggle."

These aspiring social democrats join Fraser, Carter/Brzezinski and the AFL-CIO in "unconditionally" supporting the Polish strikes. In contrast, authentic Trotskyists seek to crystallise a revolutionary left wing among the Polish workers by raising within the new workers organisations a series of demands including: for independent trade unions based on a program of defending socialist property; for the strict separation of church and state, fight clerical-nationalist reaction; for the collectivisation of agriculture; workers control of production; break the imperialist economic stranglehold — cancel the

But the "self-criticisms" are not going to wash. The Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland is thoroughly discredited and despised. More than three decades of endless, broken promises, of blatant corruption and bureaucratic oppression have made many Polish workers look favourably to Pope Wojtyla's church as the opposition. The threat of capitalist restoration is the Stalinists' legacy. It is they who capitulated to and then wooed the church, who conciliated the peasantry at the cost of the workers, who incited anti-Semitism and Polish nationalism, who have allowed Western bankers to grab Poland's economy by the short hairs. Their total incapacity to defend the revolutionary gains — that is their real crime.

The Bolsheviks and the church

"One of the first decrees of the Soviet Power in Russia was the decree concerning the separation of the church from the State. All its landed estates were taken away from the church and handed over to the working population. All the capital of the church became the property of the workers. The endowments which had been assigned to the church under the tsarist regime were confiscated.... Religion has become the private affair of every citizen. The Soviet Power rejects all thoughts of using the church in any way whatever as a means for strengthening the proletarian State."

"The separation of the school from the church aroused and continues to arouse protest from the backward elements among the workers and peasants. Many of the older generation persist in demanding that religion should still be taught in the schools as an optional subject. The Communist Party fights resolutely against all such attempts to turn back...."

"The decree whereby the school is separated from the church must be rigidly enforced, and the proletarian State must not make the slightest concession to medievalism.... We must see to it that the school assumes the offensive against religious propaganda in the home, so that from the very outset the children's minds shall be rendered immune to all those religious fairy tales which many grown-ups continue to regard as truth."

"The socialist State, when its economic apparatus has been perfected, will introduce labour service for the clergy as for all unproductive classes, so that they will have to become workers or peasants."

— Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1919)

foreign debt; for the military defence of the USSR against imperialism; for the revolutionary unity of Polish and Russian workers. In this way we seek to drive a wedge between the reactionary Catholic forces and the pro-imperialist dissidents on the one hand and pro-socialist workers on the other, winning these latter forces to the program for political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and for a government based on workers councils.

Predictably the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) announced it "takes its stand" with the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy. Echoing the new regime the SPA admits Gierek made "mistakes".

The Communist Party (CPA), which has long held a position *in favour* of "pluralist democracy" and *against* the dictatorship of the proletariat, took its side with the liberals in the bureaucracy. The CPA talks about "renovating Polish socialism" but this is not just liberal Stalinism a la Dubcek. In the 24 September *Tribune* they uncritically reprint an excerpted statement from Carillo's Spanish CP, one of the more blatantly pro-imperialist Eurocommunist parties, which concludes,

"... the democratisation of the countries of Eastern Europe and the achievement of

Continued on page 8

Melbourne Spartacist League Forum

Poland, Afghanistan and the Russian Question

Speaker: Steve Haran (SL Central Committee)

Venue: Plumbers Hall
52 Victoria Street, Carlton

Thursday October 16
8.00pm

For more information phone (03) 62-5135

Elections...

Continued from page 2

planes". But what is a "real" Labor government if not one which administers the *bourgeois* state? Keig's plea is simply one for the reform of capitalism. As for the CPA, it is backing even *right-wing* aspects of Laborism, for instance racist protectionist tariffs to "save our jobs" in the face of cheap Asian-produced commodities.

Unlike the CPA, which joined with Carter and Fraser in calling for the Red Army to get out of Afghanistan, the Socialist Party (SPA) is centring its campaign on the need for "detente" and "peaceful coexistence", and wants to see the "war-mad" Fraser government replaced by "progressive and peace loving forces". It further calls for "nuclear free zones, an end to nuclear testing, and total disarmament" (*Socialist*, 24 September). The SPA at least points out that the ALP "stands for the preservation of the capitalist system", but it nonetheless "would welcome the election of a Labor Party Government" (SPA election brochure). Why? Because it sees the ALP as the "peace loving force" to replace Fraser. But just look at Hayden's line on Russia; in power he would be just as anti-Soviet. Yet this, along with pacifistic calls for disarmament, is how the pro-Moscow SPA "defends" the USSR. In contrast, in the face of imperialism's massive arms build-up, we do not call on the USSR to disarm but instead seek to mobilise the working class to disarm the imperialists through class struggle and proletarian revolution. That is the only road to peace — the road of Lenin in 1917.

All these opportunist groups have the reformist program of the ALP, but not its mass support: none deserve any electoral support. In any case, they're all standing *for*, not *against*, the ALP, all making it clear by reassuring would-be supporters that they can still vote Labor by giving their second preference to the ALP.

As for those "left" tendencies within the ALP, their verbal criticisms and paper differences with the Hayden/Hawke leadership matter not in the slightest now as they trudge around door-knocking and leafletting to get out the vote. The Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) in the NSW ALP, led by Bob Gould, whose politics parallel the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) epitomises this "left" Labor loyalism. (The SLL is standing ten candidates, but a vote for them is out of the question since their role as mouth-piece for the bonapartist strongman of Libya, Colonel Qaddafi, has taken them out of the workers movement altogether.) The Gould clot make much of "labour principle", but in *practice* it orients to the *right* wing of the ALP bureaucracy against the equally treacherous "left" Steering Committee. The SLG's *Keep Left* (no 2, June 1980) even had great praise for Hayden, who they said played a "significant and progressive" role in the bureaucratic squabble in the Queensland branch of the party — while merely tut-tutting that Hayden's outrageous attack on the metal unions' 35-hour week campaign "should be viewed with concern".

In or out of the ALP, the fake-left is beating the anti-Fraser pro-ALP drum

and on 17 October are staging a series of rallies against the government. An "anti-Fraser" rally the day before the election is transparently pro-Hayden, but the organisers have gone out of their way to make it a class-collaborationist event as well. As *Tribune* (24 September) put it, the aim is "to bring together all forces opposed to the Fraser government" — period. No question here of raising demands such as the defence of the USSR, not to mention any opposing the rest of the ALP's treacherous policies. To do so would draw the class line and prevent anti-Fraserites like Don Chipp's Australian Democrats or the bishops of the Church of England (which sent a contingent to a 19 September Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment march in Melbourne) from attending. The 17 October rallies are consciously *popular-frontist* mobilisations whose program is necessarily bourgeois. Just as the popular front of Allende led the Chilean workers to bloody defeat, so these rallies — on a greatly reduced scale — can only help pave the way for future sellouts of the working class.

Social democracy and its hangers-on have shown time and again that they are incapable of resolving any of the problems facing the working class. Unable to prevent capitalism's crises they only compound them by holding the working class back from finishing this system for good and replacing it with a rationally organised socialist society. And in a period of revolutionary upsurge in Australia, it will be the ALP which will seek to head off that development, killing workers and leftists in the process if need be. Hawke, Hayden and their "left" waterboys are, in Trotsky's words, the physicians who tend to ailing capitalism as it lies on its deathbed. Yet the working class is not the healer of capitalism but its gravedigger. If it is to accomplish that historic task, the workers of Australia will need a revolutionary party to lead them to the seizure of state power. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building such a party, but we know that it will be forged only in the struggle to politically destroy the Labor Party, not reform it.

— No to the imperialist war drive! No US bases or B-52s! Defend the Soviet Union! Disarm the imperialists through class struggle!

— Vote Labor! Oust the reformist misleaders — Hawke, Hayden, Wran; Uren Halfpenny, Hartley!

— Down with Laborite class collaboration! For a revolutionary workers party!

— Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Down with ALP support for anti-Soviet boycotts! Send the wool to the Soviet Union!

— Down with the bosses' arbitration system! Courts out of the unions! For the complete independence of the workers movement from the bourgeois state!

— No to protectionism/racism/nationalism! For international workers solidarity with Asian workers!

— Not the bosses' parliament, but a workers government based on workers organisations to expropriate the capitalist class!

— Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

Workers party...

Continued from page 4

1976, broke a teachers' strike in 1979, laid off teachers and closed schools.

The 1976 city craft workers' strike against a Board of Supervisors' wage-cutting attack on their unions brought San Francisco to the edge of what could have been a victorious general strike. The Spartacist League called for extending the strike to other unions in a general strike to shut down the city. Instead the CLC stabbed the strikers in the back by sending them back to work. Then-supervisor, Democratic Party Mayor Dianne Feinstein bragged that the Board was able to "settle it without putting any money on the table". It's high time to reverse these attacks and get the powerful San Francisco labour movement back on its feet. Enough! It's time for a workers party!

Class struggle is a test of revolutionary

leadership and the other left groups failed it in the 1976 strike. Some are running in this election: four or five social democrats, a long-time Stalinist fellow traveller and a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The ex-Trotskyist SWP has moved so far from proletarian politics that it is standing a scab, Andrew Pulley, for president. They used to admire another candidate for supervisor — Richard Hongisto, gadfly cop and former jail warden! Anyone who tells workers to believe in "hip" cops or puts a scab on the ballot has no claim on workers' votes.

This election campaign is an opportunity for the Spartacist League to present the program of socialist revolution in a concrete and immediate way — it is, in fact, the only solution to the hardship and threats to working people's jobs. Unemployment, street crime, biting increases in housing costs, transit breakdowns, cuts in welfare, food stamps and unemployment benefits, schools that don't educate — all these things hit minorities hardest, particularly blacks. Coleman will be explaining to thousands that the Trotskyist program of the Spartacist League is the only way to attack these ills.

The Spartacist Party Campaign Committee will use this opportunity to combat electoralist illusions and make the point that social gains will be made on the picket lines, not in the ballot box. Running in elections is an adjunct to a Leninist party's general propaganda and agitation, a subordinate tactic in the fight for revolutionary leadership of the working class. We will use the campaign the way Diana Coleman would use the office if elected — as a platform to rally the workers to the battle lines of the class struggle. Just as the Bolsheviks fought in the tsar's Duma, we will fight in the capitalist elections to lead the workers in the direction of the revolutionary conquest of state power.

adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 264, 19 September 1980

Hawke confronted...

Continued from page 3

the only real alternative to Fraser and the capitalist system is a workers government based on workers organisations. And that requires a revolutionary class-struggle leadership and not the ilk of Bob Hawke."

The core of Hawke's answer was his calculated, anti-Soviet, redbaiting rave which confirmed everything comrade Florrimell had said:

"In the democratic labour movement, we happen to believe that there is great virtue in having citizen military forces...."

What would you prefer — citizen military forces where you can freely make a choice as to whether you'll participate, or the situation that operates in the Soviet Union where you've got no bloody choice what you'll do?"

"Free choice" or not, the "citizen military force" Hawke is trying to build is to defend *capitalist* Australia — and that means breaking strikes as well as joining in the US imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive. We say no to *any* bosses' army. But we are not pacifists either. Despite the reign of Hawke's counterrevolutionary bureaucratic counterparts in the Kremlin, the Soviet degenerated workers state better have a powerful army — conscription, too: whatever is needed!

The LAG clot is incapable of showing any opposition to Hawke because their opportunism leads them to cling to his coattails. At a subsequent LAG meeting on 2 October, they confirmed they have no real criticisms of either Hawke or the ALP by refusing even to discuss Spartacist Club slogans for the proposed October 17 "anti-Fraser" rallies. No wonder, since our class demands — "No bloc with the bourgeois Chippocrists! For the revolutionary independence of the labour movement!" and "Down with ALP support for anti-Soviet boycotts! Send the wool to USSR!" among others — cut directly against LAG and the CPA's aspirations for a class-collaborationist popular-frontist bloc

against Fraser. But both here and at LaTrobe the message was clear: if you want class action for communism, if you're disgusted with Labor's betrayals, if you're sick of "leftists" who constantly cave in to the ALP, you belong in the Spartacist League. ■

Poland and the left...

continued from page 7

socialism with the democracy in the countries of Western Europe, are two processes which mutually influence each other."

The CPA had earlier run a statement by the Italian CP which described the Stalinist rule in Poland as "too tight a robe over an expanding, strengthening body in which a many-sided pluralist life pulsates" (3 September). The suggestive quality of this passage aside, the reformist formulae about "mutual influence" and "pluralism" for Poland are recipes for capitalist restoration. For those in any doubt *Tribune* (17 September) ran an unbelievable testament to the Polish Pope by Dave Davies. Reporting on Wojtyla's trip to Brazil (and not mentioning Poland) Davies relates how under the leadership of John Paul II the church has become "less identified with the worst aspects of capitalism and imperialism and more concerned with peace and disarmament, human rights and poverty". According to Davies the Pope, who has "an extraordinary capacity to relate to crowds", just can't help being progressive, despite his "doctrinaire" bent. A guest of the Brazilian generals, he took the Latin American clergy to task for their "radicalism" — but, asks Davies, "did not the Pope himself say that people were poor and repressed?". The message for Poland comes through loud and clear. This obscene wooing of "Dr Strangelove" Brzezinski's Polish compatriot, a man considered a rightwinger by even bishops in his own church, is nauseating but in keeping for types like the CPA's Davies who have applauded for years the Italian CP's alliance with the Vatican. At least in Stalinist Poland you can get a cheap, safe abortion. You won't get one in Berlinguer and Wojtyla's Italy. So much for the CPA's "feminism".

Over the past couple of years, a series of key questions have tested the political capacity of various groups claiming to stand for Marxism and Leninism. At the time of the overthrow of the bloody shah, when millions were chanting "Long live Khomeini" we alone warned there must be no support to the clerical-reactionary mullahs. Our slogan "Down with the shah, Down with the mullahs — For workers revolution in Iran!" was angular and did not gain us popularity at the time. Now, tragically, we are being proved right tenfold.

As we wrote in the document of the first delegated conference of the international Spartacist tendency, "The Trotskyist position of unconditional defence of the gains of the October Revolution will have the same cutting edge as our opposition to the popular front in West Europe and Chile had in the previous period" (*Spartacist*, no 27-28, Winter 1979-80). Events soon confirmed our analysis. For in the face of Carter's Cold War propaganda about "Afghan self-determination", when most of the left condemned the Soviet intervention, we raised the slogan "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

And now on Poland, where everyone from ultra-reactionaries to pseudo-Trotskyists has unconditionally hailed the strikers, we insist there are the possibilities both of proletarian political revolution and capitalist restoration. It could go either way — it is the job of Trotskyists to see that it turns out to be the former and not the latter.

— adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 264, 19 September 1980

Australasian Spartacist

Revolutionary Literature

Spartacist League Sydney public office

Thursday: 5.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Saturday: 12 noon to 5 pm

2nd floor,
112 Goulburn St
Sydney

What is Paul White afraid of?

Communists and cowards

Speaking at a public meeting in London in 1977, International Marxist Group leader Bob Pennington remarked that those who proclaim themselves Trotskyists will have to choose between two "mainstreams", the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) and his own "United Secretariat" (Usec). Pennington had particularly in mind the followers of Sean Matgamna's International Communist League (I-CL), but his comment is applicable to all those centrist groups who try to steer a course between the Trotskyism of the iSt and the increasingly rightward-moving Usec.

In Australia there has been little in the way of centrist organisations since the Mandeliste Communist League (CL) committed political suicide and liquidated into the grossly reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). But of late, a centrist clot in Melbourne has been gathering around former CLer and SWPer Paul White. White likes to pretend that he represents only himself, but in fact he is the leading light in a not-so-very-clandestine, but very paranoid, study circle. So to give White a chance to defend his politics before a public audience, the Melbourne Spartacist League (SL) recently challenged him to a debate on Poland. Below we reprint excerpts from our challenge.

White recently wrote back a voluminous, wordy tome twice as long as the original letter declaring that "What is beginning in Poland — however imperfectly — is a struggle for workers' political revolution" — and that was that. Then characterising the SL as a "sect" and a "windbag's paradise", he announced he would not debate us. But coming from the garrulous leader of a discussion club — a term normally uttered with contempt by Leninists — the refusal is simple political cowardice. The SL has nothing to fear and re-extends its invitation to Comrade White — or any members of the discussion circle — to attend the public forum we're giving on Poland on 16 October (see advertisement page 7) and advance their political critique of our Trotskyist program. There, serious leftists will have the opportunity for full debate — and to see for themselves that the alternative posed by Bob Pennington is still very much to the point: it's us or the Usec. Copies of the full exchange between ourselves and Comrade White, including our reply, will be

available at the meeting or can be obtained by writing to Spartacist League, GPO Box 2339, Melbourne 3001 (Tel: [03] 62 5135) or GPO Box 3473, Sydney 2001 (Tel: [02] 264 8195).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Melbourne
21 September, 1980
Dear comrade,

This letter is to challenge you to a public debate on the current situation in Poland. It has become clear over the past

cannot avoid political struggle with the authentic Trotskyism of the Spartacist League.

So we offer you an opportunity. A clear understanding of the contradictory dynamic unfolding in Poland and the tasks and program of Trotskyists towards it is a key test for would-be revolutionists right now. The political/economic situation eventuating out of the concessions granted by the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy to the Gdansk-centred strike wave cannot last. . . . The Baltic coast general

To the CIA-Free Europe slogan of "free trade unions" we say: for trade unions independent of bureaucratic control and based on a program of defending socialised property. Against the economic strangulation of Poland by the "free world" banks we say: cancel the foreign debt! Against Stalinist bureaucracy and privilege we say: for workers control of production, prices, distribution and foreign trade. We stand for workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and for military defence of the USSR, for revolutionary unity of the Polish and Soviet working classes and for a Polish Trotskyist party. Comrade White, where do you stand on these questions?

The Russian question is the cornerstone of authentic Trotskyism. You — as an alleged Soviet defencist — showed your true colours over the Red Army incursion into Afghanistan. For instance, in the ill-fated *Partisan* (21 March 1980) you said:

"The Russian invasion must be condemned by socialists, and we must favour the withdrawal of Soviet troops."

However apologetically, you unambiguously ended up in the imperialist camp. We said "Hail Red Army!", "Extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghani peoples" in answer to the imperialist hysteria. In polemicising against our line in the same article you prove our point. To cover for your desertion of defencism you said, "the logic is to demand that the Kremlin bureaucrats start a Third World War, to expand the 'revolution'", shifting responsibility for the threat of war from the imperialists to the revolutionists. Because it was unpopular you wanted to dump Soviet defencism for pacifistic anti-war demands. In contrast the Spartacist League made defence of the USSR a central axis of our opposition to the Carter/Fraser anti-Soviet war drive.

We also noted your frenetic characterisation of the now very social-democratic Communist Party as "Stalinist" at the "Communists and Labour Movement Conference". There is a thrust behind this Stalinophobia and your desertion from defencism . . . and it leads straight into the "third camp". It is no accident that Stalinophobia goes hand-in-hand with a deep-going capitulation to social democracy, ie the Labor Party, and ultimately your own bourgeoisie. That was also Shachtman's road.

In Poland as in all the deformed workers states defence of the collectivised economies is a precondition to a successful workers political revolution. As we said in "Polish workers-move" [*Australasian Spartacist* no 77, September 1980],

"A Polish workers government must be a military bastion against NATO. And a proletarian political revolution in Poland must extend itself to the Soviet Union or, one way or another, it will be crushed."

You claim to stand for the necessary political debate to clarify questions of revolutionary strategy within the left and labour movement. The Polish events give you a chance to prove it. We propose the topic "Poland: where is it going?" . . . We also propose a mutually agreed-on chair and provision for the fullest, democratic discussion. We are of course prepared to negotiate questions of detail. Fraternally,
Steve Haran
for the Spartacist League



Soviets fight Afghan rebels who shoot teachers (above). White says "Red Army out!"

period (from, for example, the recent "Communists and the Labour Movement Conference", the material put out in your name on Iran and Nicaragua) that you, and others like Frans Timmerman, as leading elements of a larger discussion circle, are attempting to stake out a claim in this city as ostensible Trotskyists, at least somewhat to the left of the workerist, state-capitalist International Socialists and the wretched, now sect-like, reformist SWP. But to do that you

strike was a massive display of the power of the working class and many of the strikers' grievances were deeply just. But the central question is: where is the movement going? Will it be Poland for the workers or Poland for the Pope?

The overwhelming majority of those claiming to be Trotskyists have uncritically hailed this movement. The ominous presence of the Catholic church they either ignore or actually welcome as part of the "anti-Stalinist opposition". The social-democratic Workers Defence Committee (KOR) of Jacek Kuron claims "the Catholic movement is fighting to defend freedom of conscience and human dignity"; Kuron wants an "independent" Poland and "parliamentary democracy". In contrast to these social democrats we say: fight clerical-nationalist reaction! Guard against capitalist restoration!



Catholic soviets? Confessions at Gdansk shipyards.

New York Times for soviets?

Fake-Trotskyists tailing social democracy have uncritically enthused over the Polish strikers, ignoring, denying or dismissing the considerable influence of the Catholic church and of nationalistic, pro-Western sentiments among them. But the imperialist bourgeoisie is very much aware that politically contradictory mass protests against Stalinist rule in East Europe can be subordinated to the forces of capitalist restorationism. And on those rare occasions when the bourgeoisie can use the forms of proletarian organization for counterrevolutionary ends, they are quite willing to voice vague rhetoric of "workers power". In the latter stages of the Russian civil war, for example, the liberal-monarchist Cadet Party launched the slogan of "soviets without communists".

Now in an extraordinary editorial entitled, "What 'Soviet' Means in Poland", so has the *New York Times* (24 August), the central organ of the American ruling class. It begins by paralleling the *Communist Manifesto*: "There is a specter haunting the Soviet Union, and it is the ghost of genuine revolution by the workers". It goes on to hail the revolutionary traditions originating with the Paris Commune:

"The Polish workers' councils have other antecedents. Recurrently, from the days

of the Paris Commune in 1871 to the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, workers have sought social regeneration that owed little to cafe intellectuals. As Hannah Arendt contended in her essay on revolutions, these spontaneous soviets are precious emblems of what is best in the revolutionary tradition."

The *New York Times'* present enthusiasm for soviets in Poland is more than just rhetoric. The more sophisticated leaders of the bourgeoisie know that there can be soviets under reactionary as well as revolutionary leadership. They know, for example, that the Social-Democratic-led soviets in Germany in 1918 were a bastion against Bolshevism and a force for the restabilization of capitalism. (In fact these very same Social Democrats were responsible for the murder of the Communist Luxemburg — who is also praised, along with the fascist dictator Pilsudski, in this amazing editorial.)

That is why the *Times* is for anti-communist soviets in Poland. The key to proletarian political revolution in East Europe is the construction of a Leninist-Trotskyist party. We can assure our readers there will never be a *New York Times* editorial in favor of that!

— reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 264, 19 September 1980

Spartacist League

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In the August issue of *Australasian Spartacist* we printed a series of statements from comrades who have recently joined the Spartacist League (SL). Below we print a further selection of statements by comrades who have recently joined. The struggle for a communist world is the only fight worth fighting; in joining the SL the comrades have joined the only party with the Trotskyist program that can win that battle. Join the Spartacist League!

★ ★ ★ ★

Sandy M - Melbourne

There is one reason why I joined the Spartacist League: the only way forward for mankind is through international proletarian revolution to communism. Only the program of the SL is capable of achieving this.

I have always been an angry young woman. I developed a political consciousness slowly out of searching for causes for the injustices I could perceive about me. This development led me on anti-freeway and tenancy rights demonstrations, where my only achievements were to be arrested. It took me on anti-uranium rallies to protest against a metal over which I had no control, and which was open to abuse by the capitalists who do control it. It made me a feminist because I hated sexism. Worse, it made me pessimistic about ever changing the rotten social system in which we live; to counter this pessimism I would migrate to the beaches of Queensland in the hope that the surf and sun would send the rest of the world away. But it wouldn't; I have had to face the reality that I am responsible for history. It led me into a growing dialogue with members of the SL, to whom I am grateful for coming back to each argument I could raise against their program.

I argued about the validity of a vanguard party in a world where workers seem more concerned with beer and footy than fighting their oppression. I argued about the possibility of a revolutionary situation ever developing in the Australian working class, and ways of fighting for this. I understood the role of the revolutionary vanguard in the Russian Revolution but was dubious about its relevance in 1980. But I closely followed the recent garbos' strike, and saw a group of militant workers fighting a real struggle, and saw them sold out by the union bureaucracy, and realised that a vanguard party was necessary to lead that struggle to fruition; and that the lessons of the Russian Revolution and of all history are the only lessons we have.

I argued about ways of countering the pervasive and sophisticated bourgeois ideology, and the possibility of the program of the SL having any success against this dominant force. I argued endlessly about this thing, bourgeois ideology, and in the end I had to struggle against its pervasive influence on myself. My growing political consciousness brought me finally to a situation where I could no longer sit in lounge rooms and hotels and understand that the only hope for humanity lay in communism; that only then could women's oppression be fought; that only through fighting all forms of exploitation and the oppression that goes with them could the creative possibilities of mankind begin to be realised. And I understood that there is no such thing as a passive revolutionary.

The CPA conference in Melbourne finally moved me to join the SL. By the time of the conference I was in general agreement with the politics of the SL, and impressed by the program that enabled them to be right about Iran, Afghanistan and to present such a good understanding of the recent events in Poland. But I was dubious about their aggressive public face. At the CPA conference I squirmed at the first sessions as members of the SL put questions that embarrassed the speakers, and demanded to be heard when speakers tried to avoid them. During the afternoon session I realised that the SL were being answered with ridicule and abuse, and not being met politically. On the Sunday morning I was shocked to hear CPA members proclaim

Why I joined the Spartacist League

"The only way to fight for communism"

that a struggle for the right of coffee and toilet paper of itself develops revolutionary consciousness amongst workers! By the last session only the remaining vestiges of my unwillingness to go against the stream stopped me yelling "let him speak" as a member of the SL was being stopped from speaking. I came out of the CPA conference knowing not only that the program of the SL is the only way to fight for communism, but that I could not abdicate from my responsibility to the world any longer. I had to join them in the struggle. There is no alternative. Sandy M

Margaret R - Melbourne

Over the six months that I spent on the periphery of the party, I became aware that the Spartacist League was the only party with a consistent program — consistent in defending the gains of, and fighting for, the working class. I saw this as being crucial to the adoption of a correct line on future issues and demonstrative of the party's capabilities to lead the working class to proletarian state power in revolutionary times.

I think the best example of what this consistent program means is the question of Iran. The SL from the very beginning said that Khomeini would be no better than the shah, in contrast to other left groups who were happy running after the "Iranian Revolution". Now, over a year later, the situation has crystallised and it is clear the SL was correct. So why was the SL able to draw a correct analysis of the situation in the first place while other left groups failed? Precisely because it has the program.

This program means that on the industrial scene the SL takes a stand of no scabbing; you don't cross picket lines! In the workers movement the SL defends all members of the left against reactionary attack, whilst calling for no violence among the left. As fundamental as this principle seems, not all groups adhere to it — an SWP member told police at an SL demonstration that they (the police) could do what they wanted with us. Most importantly, on the international scene, the SL stands for the military defence of the Soviet Union in the face of imperialist attack. The Russian Revolution of 1917 overthrew capitalism and despite a bureaucratic degeneration, capitalism has not been restored. The property forms are still socialist — ie collective. Russia is a workers state, albeit degenerated, standing on the opposite side to the imperialist forces. Therefore the same logic used for the defence of leftists — defence of your own class — must be extended to the USSR. Defend the Soviet Union militarily against reactionary attack whilst giving no political credence to the bureaucracy!

Other left organisations, through their politics, betray the class for which they claim they stand. Take for example the International Socialists who refuse to defend the Soviet workers state; or the Socialist Workers Party who support Khomeini's repression of leftists and women; then again there's the CPA who are so reformist it's hard to distinguish them from the Labor Party.

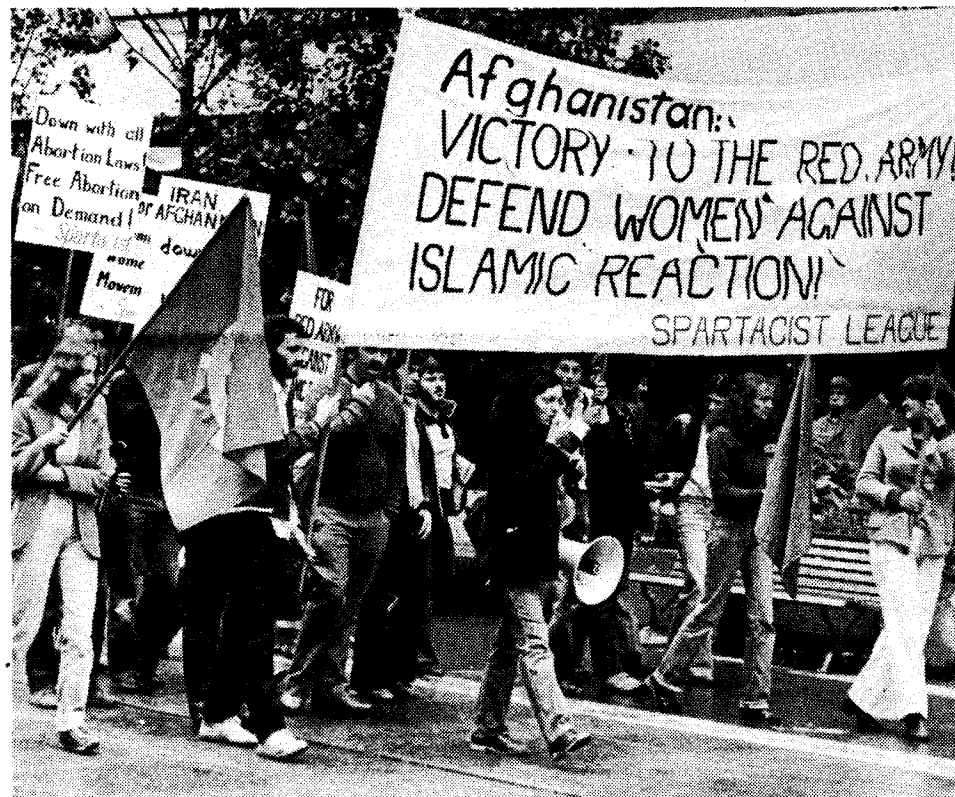
Mention of their politics brings me to another point I would like to make. There have been many accusations levelled at the "fanatical" SL for "dividing up the left" by their constant "attacks" on other

left groups. Any fool can see, by reading the press of the different left-wing groups, that the left is *already* politically divided. The differences are there and to avoid them does not unite the left. The only group which attempts to confront this problem, through political debate, is the SL. And how do the other groups respond? By exclusions or by bureaucratically suppressing debate ... what are they afraid of? Some people have called the SL sectarian, but I think those groups who refuse to debate are sectarian. Each party wants to win the working class to its program, (I presume they must believe in their program), so let them debate it.

My reasons for joining would not be complete without mentioning the "woman question". In analysing women's oppression as stemming from a class-based capitalist society, there can

self-interested in their bourgeois reforms, "sisterhood" for them only extends as far as their parliamentary law reaches (and it certainly doesn't stretch as far as Afghanistan). It is only the SL which understands that autonomy is not an option for women.

Finally, another factor which won me to the SL was its organisation as an international tendency. It is the only party which can be called truly international in its outlook. The International Socialists have no international and the SWP belong to the fake international, the United Secretariat. I call this international fake because it is only an affiliation of different groups not bound by political unity. The result can be seen in Iran where the HKS and HKE stand on opposite sides yet both belong to the United Secretariat. As the sixth statute of



SL marches on International Women's Day, Melbourne, 1980.

ASp photo

be no alternative but to build for women's liberation through the class struggle — not an independent women's movement. That feminism and Marxism are counterposed was made very clear to me when Judy Munday remarked at the CPA conference that as a feminist she felt it necessary to consider the question of electoral support for the Liberal candidate in Queensland, Rosemary Kyburz, because of her pro-abortion stand (as opposed to the anti-abortion stand of her Labor opponent). Not only is this woman on the other side of the class lines, but she has repeatedly demonstrated her hatred of the working class. This is the logic of feminism — betrayal of the working class.

I was struck by the narrow reformist attitude of women in the women's movement, this attitude also being reflected by the International Socialists in their efforts to build within the women's movement. I remember listening to a lecture given by the IS on the class basis of women's oppression only to find that it was to be followed by a discussion in which the word "revolution" did not figure. Similarly at IWD, I was appalled by women who screamed "boring" at an SL supporter who got up to speak about the position of women in Afghanistan. Too

the Fourth International says, "In each country there can be but one single section of the Fourth International". Isn't this more logical, for what is internationalism if not the unification of the working class under *one* program to defeat the capitalist class?

It was when a German comrade was knifed earlier in the year that I first became aware of the SL as an international tendency. Although this comrade was unknown to most of the Australian section, the sense of tragedy was no less than if the incident had happened here. From that time on I began to realise that the SL operates from an international perspective, the only way for a truly revolutionary party to operate. Margaret R

FG - Melbourne

All my life I have been categorised in the working class, only because my parents are unskilled labourers. We have been branded in an inferior position because we live in a capitalist society. At school we were working-class kids, so people immediately thought we were ignorant and unimportant. The majority

of kids did not succeed until the end of their twelfth year, most of them dropped out during their tenth year and their only alternative was to follow in their parents' footsteps and work in factories.

Considering I am only eighteen and have plenty of years in front of me, I decided to join the Spartacist League, not only due to their correct program, but because they are the party of the future. There is the urgent need to grow and strengthen in order to take state power. No matter how young or old you are, if you are willing to become a dedicated member (even though there will be a need for a bitter struggle) then you should not be held back.

After telling several of my friends that I had committed myself to the Spartacist League, they all asked me: "Did you think that was a wise decision?"; "Have you considered other left organisations?" Well, I'll tell you, that I have thought of other left groups and still do ponder about them quite a bit (not about joining them), but about their political lines on certain issues, eg Iran. Constantly reading our rivals' newspapers, their ideas come out quite clearly through their articles. Remember the International Socialists saying in the *Battler* of 31 March, 1979:

"The revolution in Iran has been a great victory for the people. At least the left and women now have the right to demonstrate and organise."

and the Socialist Workers Party saying in *Direct Action* of 9 November 1979:

"While religious leaders have attempted to place themselves at the head of the struggle against the Shah in order to prevent it taking a more radical direction, the mass movement is basically a progressive struggle around such issues as political freedom, trade union rights and the rights of national minorities."

These parties are obviously heading in the wrong direction towards solving Iran's problems and are only petty reformists. In Iran today under the Imam, women are being stoned to death because they have premarital sex or do not wear the *chador*. Workers are being jailed simply because they are fighting for their rights. Leftists at university campuses are being shot. The same goes for national minorities such as the Kurds. This is not what you call a "progressive struggle" or a "victory for the people". Under this religious regime, these people will remain repressed. And if you think their line on Iran is bad, you should see what they say about Afghanistan. We say "Hail Red Army" because we defend the rights of the oppressed. The only way that oppression can be ended is by a proletarian revolution. That is our line internationally, why we are striving for the rebirth of the Fourth International. Yours comradely, FG.

Mark S - Sydney

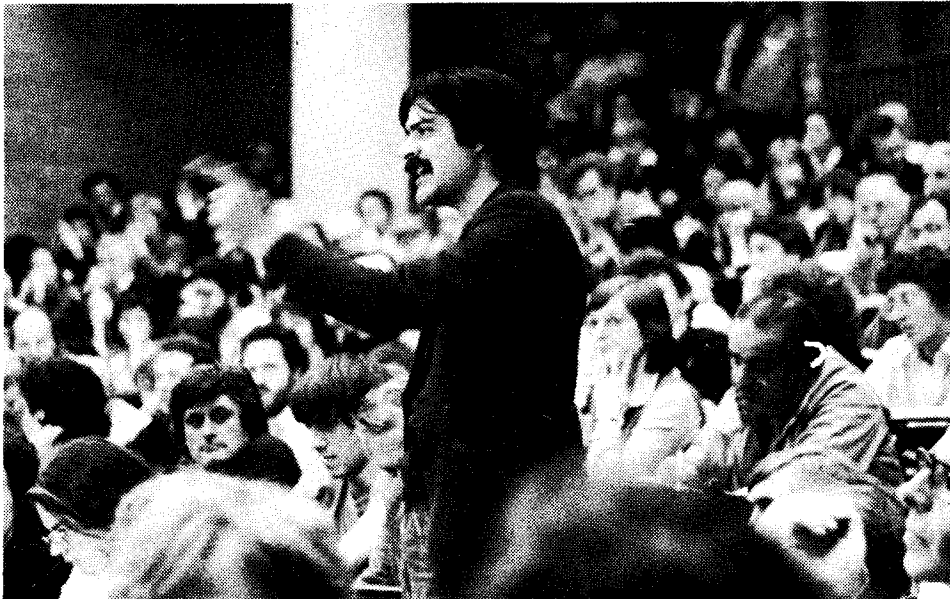
In this letter I would like to outline some of my reasons in rejoining what I see as the consistently revolutionary Marxist organisation.

The Spartacist League has resolutely stood for the independence of the working class in their struggles against the bosses, despite the fact that state power still belongs to the capitalist class in this country. This means that trade unions, as workers organisations, must be won away from the sellout bureaucrats, with the membership rejecting the bosses' "arbitration" to solve their disputes. A couple of cases in point are the printers', metal workers' and journalists' strikes at the Fairfax plant in Sydney this year. The unionists involved in these strikes met with direct opposition from the union leaders in their struggles against the bosses.

Attitudes of Communist Party (CPA) members I knew during the strikes struck me as being wrong. Not only did they excuse the non-support of one strike by workers in other sections of the plant, but also, they insisted on buying the scab papers produced. I remember one CPA

supporter arguing with me during the journo's strike, a copy of the *Sun* in hand, saying something like, "Well, the journo's have never done anything for the printers and metal workers and they're closer to management and are on a good wicket anyway". Craftism should be fought within the Australian workers movement, and to me even journalists earn their living.

Early this year, I was invited to some



Fighting for revolutionary program: Spartacist speaker at CP history conference.

poorly attended meetings of the Movement Against Fascism and Racism (MAFAR) — supported by the CPA and Socialist Party (SPA). There it was said that fascism in this country would be similar, if not the same, in character to Hitler's Nazism, ie anti-Jewish. But a native Australian fascist movement would centrally focus on anti-Asia racism.

Iran/Iraq...

Continued from page 12

oppose any imperialist intervention in the region; which would necessarily be aimed not only against Iran/Iraq but also against the Soviet Union.

For decades, the fake left internationally have abjectly tailed the so-called "Arab Revolution" — ie, every bourgeois nationalist regime in the Middle East, no matter how oppressive, which expressed nationalist hostility to the Israeli Zionist state. In 1979, the same opportunist left all cheered Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" to power. Now what do they have to say as their former heroes try to destroy each other in an "Arabs versus Persians" nationalist war?

The British International Marxist Group, despite back-peddalling earlier this year from their previous hailing of the mullahs, came out for an Iranian victory. Its Australian "fraternal" group, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), approvingly quoted "Imam" Khomeini himself: "We are at war with America and today the hand of America has come out of the sleeve of Iraq" (*Direct Action*, 24 September). Two months before, the SWP had toured its Iranian co-thinker Fatima Fallahi. Outrageously justifying every single atrocity committed by Khomeini, Fallahi explained how her comrades in the HKE were busy campaigning for an "army of 20 million" to defend Iran against Iraq. They even advised Khomeini that he could get the Kurds to defend his regime if only he would ease up on his genocidal war against them.

Now they've got the war they've been preparing for, the HKE has presumably gone off to do its duty and kill Kurds and Iraqi workers in the name of "defending the revolution". This is the real program of the HKE/SWP in Iran — nationalist slaughter on behalf of Islamic fundamentalism ... and the shah's conquests.

SWP leader Nita Keig rationalises it all by saying that Iraq is not "revolutionary" or "socialist" as it claims. So Iran is?! Only "reactionary" countries like Saudi Arabia are lining up with Iraq, all the "progressive" capitalist regimes are on

Iran's side, she argues. This liberal division of the world into "good" and

Yet contacting of resident Asians was totally ignored by the organisers who said instead that, "Fascism here would be directed against those from Australia's major source of immigrants, ie Greeks and Italians". But the real problem with MAFAR that I saw was that they consciously sought to "fight fascism" by blocking with liberal-bourgeois types. As one CPAer told me, "Even the Australian Democrats would be welcome to partici-

pate in MAFAR". They were just trying to build popular fronts.

Compare this with the demonstrations led by the Spartacist League/US against the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis in the past year. In Detroit, 500 black workers and leftists rallied in protest against the Greensboro massacre of adventurist

"bad" exploiters is fundamentally treacherous, but also arrant nonsense even in its own terms. Qaddafi's Libya is supposed to be an "anti-imperialist" stalwart, but Qaddafi's "neutral" appeals for negotiations are loaded in Iraq's favour. Even the SWP's hero Fidel Castro, who heads the bureaucratic caste of the Cuban deformed workers state, doesn't seem to share the SWP view; his offers to mediate were spurned in Teheran.

The Iraqi Ba'athists have their camp followers on the left, too, such as Bill Hartley of the Victorian ALP Socialist Left. Hartley was the connection who arranged "radical" Middle East tours, passing through Baghdad, for dozens of Labor identities, and who arranged the abortive Iraqi \$500,000 loan to cover the ALP's election debts in 1976. He ended up on the payroll of the Iraqi News Agency, and the present war finds him inundating the bourgeois media with the latest battlefield lies telexed direct from Baghdad to his Melbourne INA office.

For Gerry Healy of the politically corrupt Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain and its international entourage, long-time opportunist tailism of the "Arab Revolution" became an avenue out of the workers movement altogether and into the service of the Qaddafi dictatorship. Healy's line, and that of his Australian operation, comes straight from Tripoli, with the Socialist

Maoists by these fascists. Last April, a proposed celebration of Hitler's birthday in San Francisco was defeated by a 1200-strong trade-union-backed rally of workers, blacks, students and civil-rights activists. With all the taunts and jeers of "sectarianism" made against the various sections of the international Spartacist tendency, not one supporter from the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) even bothered to participate in the united-front demonstration against the fascists. For instance, the SWP prefers to debate the fascists at their "public" forums, while excluding SL supporters.

These mobilisations around Spartacist platforms themselves refute any charges of sectarianism that other people may wish to stick upon the SL. Moreover, these same events helped propel me personally back to the SL after a brief period outside the organisation, and to a realisation that a revolutionary can only work within a party dedicated wholly to its work. Working as an individual means remaining blind to the fact that capitalism (and in crises, fascism) is too strong and organised for "one-off" attacks on the system.

The SL's line for workers revolution in Iran, its consistent defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, including its hailing the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, were also important reasons for my wanting to rejoin. I now can only urge all serious leftists — unionist, student or otherwise — to learn more about the international Spartacist tendency and compare its politics with those of other fake "revolutionary" or "Trotskyist" organisations, with a view to joining a world party committed to overthrowing capitalism in the West and restoring workers democracy in the East. Yours comradely, Mark S

Labour League's (SLL) *Workers News* running headlines like "Iraq offers peace terms". Its editorial statement (27 September) began by proclaiming that the SLL "reaffirms its support for the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party of Iraq and the Iranian Revolution under the leadership of the Ayatollah..."!! Raving lunacy if it were sincere, this only proves again that the only consistency the SLL needs is with its Libyan master's policies. They have been calling anyone who didn't praise Khomeini to the skies — even the grovelling SWP — CIA agents. Is Iraq's Hussein now a CIA agent too?

The Iran/Iraq war is but one more defeat for the working class of the Middle East. But as Lenin and the Bolsheviks showed in 1917, a war which begins between two capitalist powers does not have to end as an armed peace between those same two states. There is another road, the road of civil war against both the Iranian theocracy and the Ba'athist military regime. To see that struggle to a successful conclusion a Trotskyist vanguard party is needed to lead the working class to the establishment of their own rule. Only under this program, the program of Permanent Revolution, will true national liberation for the masses of the area be accomplished and the road opened to the socialist future. Turn the guns the other way! Toward a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!■

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"Iranian Revolution" meets "Arab Revolution"

Iran/Iraq blowout

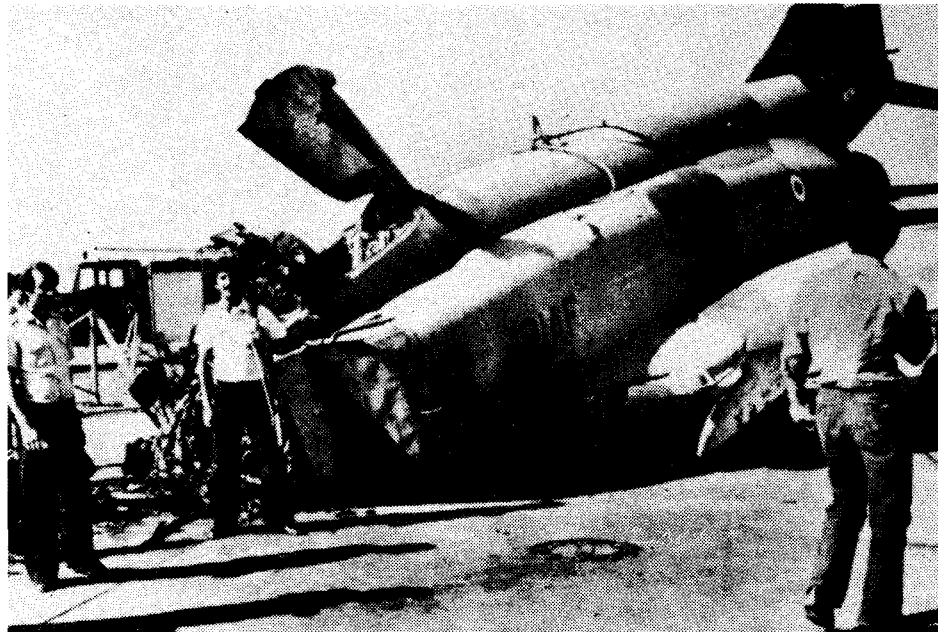
6 OCTOBER — After months of bloody frontier skirmishes and vitriolic propaganda offensives, the Iran/Iraq border has finally blown. On 22 September a cocky Saddam Hussein, the Ba'athist strongman of Iraq, unleashed what was meant to be a lightning strike against Iran. The immediate objectives: to seize control of the Shatt al-Arab waterway, Iraq's sole water outlet for its massive oil exports; to rip off three fly-speck Persian Gulf islands previously seized by the shah; and to slice off a few kilometres of Iranian territory along the disputed border. On Iran's part the war is to defend every paltry inch of these mini-conquests of the shah and his entire Persian-chauvinist empire. On both sides, however, the age-old refrain of nationalist ruling classes is the same: "We will defend every piece of our sacred soil to the last drop of the people's blood!"

In this squalid conflict between two equally reactionary regimes, Leninists have no side. To the workers of Iran and Iraq, to the Kurdish people whom Hussein, the shah and the Ayatollah Khomeini (as well as others) have at different times tried to wipe off the face of the earth, to the powerful oil workers in the immediate battle zone, we say: turn your guns the other way! Down with this bloody slaughter, which benefits only your oppressors! The main enemy is at home!

This program of revolutionary defeatism is the only way to intersect an historic opportunity to cut across the multiple national differences in the area and to begin building the internationalist, Trotskyist party which can lead the workers to power throughout the region. For the Kurdish people, long dismembered by the area's imperialist-drawn state boundaries, it is a chance also to carve out a state of their own if they want it. Those who line up with either of the repressive dictatorships waging this war are thus traitors to the working class and the Kurds; they are the enemies of international proletarian revolution.

Unlike the fake left internationally who rushed to cheer one or another of the "progressive" despots they're currently tailing, class-conscious workers have good reason to actively hate both sides in this petty, sordid war. In just 18 months in power, Khomeini's mullahs have butchered literally thousands of Kurds, Turkomen, Arab workers in Khuzistan and Azerbaijanis; they have driven the left underground and have reinstated a barbaric Islamic code which stipulates that women wear the stifling black *chador* (veil) and that "sexual offenders" be buried up to their chests in sand and stoned to death for their "crimes".

As for Hussein's "Ba'ath Socialist Party", it showed its colours in 1978 when it murdered dozens of leaders and militants of the Iraqi Communist Party. His military clique, which came to power in 1968 after a series of coups and counter coups, runs a brutal police state whose equivalent of SAVAK puts thousands of opponents into its notorious torture chambers. Whenever war breaks out with Israel, they hang a few more of what's left of the Iraqi Jews in the public squares as "Zionist agents". And for years, Hussein's army carried out a



Iranian Phantom jet destroyed in Iraqi raid on Teheran airport (above). Iranian President Bani-Sadr with troops on Iran/Iraq border (left). Revolutionaries have no side in this squalid nationalist conflict. We say to Iran/Iraq workers: turn the guns the other way, against your "own" rulers!

genocidal war against the country's Kurdish population; by the time the shooting stopped, he had killed more than 25,000.

But the class forces exist in both these countries to smash these filthy capitalist regimes. In the late forties and early fifties in Iran the working class shook the bourgeois state to its foundations. And it was the oil workers' strikes — the one proletarian component in the clergy-led anti-shah mobilisations of 1978 — which eventually broke the back of the shah's regime.

Likewise in Iraq, the strategic oil workers have a long history of resisting not only their own bloody ruling class but also Moscow's "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and bourgeois nationalism. In July 1958 it was the Stalinist CP, the mass party of the Iraqi workers, which in bloc with nationalist officers under General Kassem led the popular uprising which swept away the Hashemite monarchy of King Faisal. Under pressure from the revolutionary masses the CP went into opposition to Kassem and sections of the party were pushing to overthrow him and take power directly. In the pursuit of detente the Kremlin openly supported Kassem, and denounced the

Iraqi CP, paving the way for Kassem, and after him the leaders of the 1963 Ba'athist coup, to launch a savage drive against the CP.

But this proletarian power can only be unleashed by an internationalist program of opposition to all the national chauvinisms in the area, which fights against the Stalinist policy of blocs with "progressive" bourgeois nationalists, and which seeks to mobilise the thousands of foreign-born workers — from Pakistan, South Yemen, Kuwait, and the other gulf states — who also work the oilfields on both sides of the artificial state border dividing Iran and Iraq. These are the forces which must be mobilised — not as cannon fodder but as the power to end this wanton slaughter. Turn this nationalist conflict into a class civil war! Not Iranian worker against Iraqi worker, but both together against the Baghdad colonels and holy men of Teheran!

Hussein's move against Iran was prompted by narrow regional ambitions. For decades the shah, backed by US imperialism, ruled as the top regional cop. He took the military hardware that the Pentagon supplied him and made Iran the dominant power, pushing out the other contenders. Now that the shah has

gone and the army he built up crippled by repeated Islamic purges, Hussein is pushing back in.

But this tin-pot tyrant is not only corrupt, he is incompetent to boot. A week and a half after first announcing their "capture" of the Khuzistan city of Khorramshahr, the Iraqis are still bogged down in street fighting in the suburbs. The Iraqi air force MiGs mounted a would-be preventive first strike on Iranian airfields but managed to leave most of the targeted planes in one piece. As a result Iranian Phantoms have been able to disable practically all of Iraq's oil installations in retaliation for Iraqi bombing raids which turned the giant Abadan oil refinery and the Kharg Island oil loading facility into virtual fireballs. While each side announced more "great victories" each day, the fighting has ground to a stalemate with the Iraqi drive stalled somewhere beyond the border, occupying a lot of desert but little else. For the workers of Iran and Iraq, if their "own" rulers manage to destroy each other's arsenals of tanks and jets in this war, that at least would be no bad thing.

Hussein no doubt also thought that crippling Iran's oil industry, the foundation of its economy, would bring the mullahs to terms. He probably even had visions of annexing the oil-rich Khuzistan province with its mainly Arab population. But Khomeini is a genuine fanatic for whom poverty and material want are *desiderata* — the keystones of his seventh-century vision of an "Islamic Republic". However, the mullahs aren't going to give up the Khuzistan oil wells either. They would probably rather blow them up, as surrender would only strengthen secessionist movements among the Kurds, Baluchis and other national minorities who populate some of Iran's other oil-producing districts. Minus the petro-dollars and the oil-centred proletariat, Iran would begin to resemble something like a Persian Afghanistan.

Naturally each of these "anti-imperialist" autocracies are making out that the other one is the tool of US imperialism. In fact, however, Washington didn't want this war. The USSR is much better placed than the US to extend its influence either through "mediation" or selective arms supplies across its southern border. That is the last thing Washington wants as it beats the war drums of Cold War II in the wake of Afghanistan. So Carter is trying to angle deals with each warring camp: stringing along the pro-shah remnants whom Hussein has been aiding, while offering the Ayatollah a straight trade — military spare parts for hostages.

What does have the imperialists worried is the fact that 66 percent of Europe's and 69 percent of Japan's oil comes through the Straits of Hormuz at the head of the Persian Gulf. Washington is taking the opportunity to arm-twist its imperialist competitors into acting more like "allies", mounting a joint naval task force to keep the still unclosed straits open. Australia's mini-Cold Warrior Malcolm Fraser predictably jumped at the chance, sending off the accident-prone HMAS Melbourne to "help" the big boys. Revolutionaries must militantly

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