

Australasian SPARTACIST



NUMBER 64

JUNE 1979

TWENTY CENTS

Save the Fedayeen! Defend the national minorities!

Iranian left under the gun

The clerical reactionaries who now hold sway in Iran have stepped up their drive to crush all opposition to Islamic theocratic rule. Having successfully muzzled almost all of the newspapers critical of the Khomeini regime, they may soon follow this up with a full-scale assault on the left.

In the wake of savage fighting between pro-government forces and Kurdish, Turkoman and now Arab rebels, the mullahs have singled out the Guevarist Fedayeen guerrillas for suppression. Because of their military aid to these embattled national minorities, over 200 Fedayeen militants were arrested in a series of raids during April, and Fedayeen offices in Abadan were stormed by a mob of 2000 Muslim militiamen. As some 500 members and supporters of the Fedayeen were ending a three-day sit-in at the Ministry of Justice in Teheran to protest against the arrests, the Khomeinist fanatics gathered to chant, "Down with the leftists! Death to the communists!"

When the mysterious Forghan terrorists gunned down both General Mohammed Ali Gharani and Ayatollah Morteza Motahari -- revealing that he was a leading member of Khomeini's secret Revolutionary Council -- in late April, the mullahs seized the opportunity to unleash a torrent of frenzied anti-communist propaganda. The funerals for the slain officials and the proletarian holiday of May Day were turned into occasions for reactionary demonstrations demanding "Death to the communists!"

It is not only the Fedayeen and the oppressed nationalities that are under the gun of the Islamic thugs. Gharani's funeral turned into a right-wing mobilisation directed against the entire left -- extending even to the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh Party, which has given Khomeini servile support every step of the way. The hundreds of thousands of demonstrators supplemented

their cries of "Death to the enemies of Islam!" with the more specific, "Tudeh, Fedayeen: assassins!"

Hundreds of thousands more flocked to the funeral of the previously obscure Motahari. "I will kill, kill, kill those who killed my brothers", screamed the marchers, denouncing the left as "parasites on society". Three days later Khomeini made it clear how the "parasites" would be dealt with. The most fanatical of the Muslim militia would be organised into an elite "Guardians of the Revolution" responsible not to the civilian provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan but solely to Khomeini's Council. Their stated purpose -- "armed combat" against the enemies of the "Islamic Revolution". Behind it all is the threat to forcibly disarm the left -- Khomeini's stated objective since he came to power in February -- and leave them defenceless before the slaughter. As one militiaman put it, "We are awaiting orders from Ayatollah Khomeini. If he gives the order, we will put them in their proper place" (*Newsweek*, 14 May).

Khomeini gags the press

The Forghan assassinations were also the spark for the regime's confrontation with the press. *Ayandegan*, one of Iran's daily newspapers, has been a forum for mild leftist and liberal criticism of the new regime. But when the paper published the manifestos of the Forghan Fighters, which denounced the "dictatorship of the mullahs" in the name of Islam, it drew the wrath of Khomeini himself. In short order Muslim thugs destroyed or confiscated bundles of *Ayandegan* and occupied or sacked its offices across the country, denouncing the paper as simultaneously "Communist", "Zionist" and "satanic". By 12 May *Ayandegan* was forced to suspend publication. Next came the turn of *Kayhan*, second of the three leading Teheran dailies, whose Islamic workers



Soldier of Khomeini's New Revolutionary Army patrolling Teheran street in February.

barred entry to 22 journalists they claimed were leftists after the paper reprinted *Ayandegan's* final front-page editorial. The leftist daily *Peygham Emruz* and the satirical weekly *Ahangar* have also been forced underground.

On 17 May, "Iranian Women's Day", the Khomeinists staged yet another show of strength. In a tragic display of the continued hold of religious reaction over the Iranian masses, 100,000 women, swathed in *chadors* and carefully segregated from the male marchers, chanted "Islam is victorious, down with the traitors!" Three days later government supporters armed with clubs and staves attacked a 50,000-strong protest against Islamic censorship of the press. These are ominous signs -- for it is not simply brutal military suppression which puts the Iranian left in peril but, as in Indonesia in 1965, the possibility of a combined assault by the regular army and a viciously anti-communist Muslim mass movement.

A major confrontation between the left and Islamic theocracy has been delayed only by the chaotic conditions produced by the rapid and complete disintegration of the shah's imperial state apparatus. The attempt to consolidate Khomeini's rule has also meant the execution of some of the most hated butchers of the shah's SAVAK and army -- the one act of this dangerous regime which is worthy of applause. We know well whose hands hold the rifles after the Islamic courts pronounce sentence, but we know too that nearly all of these butchers deserve to die. We would gladly extradite the shah himself to Teheran to face his victims -- end the "vacation" of this mass murderer!

A prisonhouse of oppressed peoples

As in tsarist Russia, where the Great Russian minority of 47 percent dominated a huge empire, so it is in Iran today. Historically, this prisonhouse of peoples -- where only two-fifths of the population is Persian -- is a tinder-box for revolutionary-democratic agitation. In the post-1917 period revolutionary ferment swept through the northern provinces bordering the USSR and short-lived "democratic republics" were established in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan under the tutelage of Soviet occupation forces at the end of World War II. But under the mullahs, just as under the shah, the national demands of Khuzistan Arabs, the Kurds, Turkomans, Azerbaijanis and Baluchis are viciously suppressed. It is in the assaults against the national minorities that Khomeini -- in league with remnants of the shah's army -- is forging the new



In March, thousands of women took to the streets to protest against Khomeini's attempts to reimpose the veil.

Continued on page five

Who's behind IC provocation against Spartacist?

The "International Committee" (IC) of Gerry Healy and Mike Banda, centred on their British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and with satellites in the US (Workers League -- WL) and Australia (Socialist Labour League -- SLL), has long had an extremely unsavoury flavour. Once a claimant to the mantle of "anti-revisionist Trotskyism" the Healyite IC has since 1976 placed itself in the service of Muammar Qaddafi, megalomaniacal strongman of Libya, utilising on behalf of its patron the characteristic "method" of the Healyite political bandits -- gangsterism and slander.

Last month, *Workers Vanguard* (27 April), paper of the Spartacist League/US (SL/US), excoriated Healy/Banda for their efforts to justify the bloody suppression of the Iraqi Communist Party (CP) at the hands of the Qaddafi-allied bourgeois-nationalist Ba'ath regime. At the same time, the SL/US was sponsoring a widely-publicised tour by Fatima Khalil, a Near Eastern communist woman, as part of our tendency's political offensive against the reactionary "Islamic republic" of Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran.

Goaded to new paroxysms of slander, the WL's yellow-journalism *Bulletin* (1 May) responded with a 12-column pathological smear article entitled, "The Spartacist League: Provocateurs Against Trotskyism and the Iranian Revolution". Several days later, Healy's own *News Line* (4 May) ran a shorter, but no less pernicious, piece entitled, "The Shah's gunmen". The *Bulletin* seized on the SL's Trotskyist line on Iran as the excuse for a new orgy of cop-baiting slander:

"[The Iranian revolution] has earned the hatred of the CIA, the U.S. Corporations, the military and the entire Carter administration. Nowhere is this hatred expressed more viciously however, than in the pages of the revisionist press -- *The Militant*, published by the Socialist Workers Party [SWP], and *Workers Vanguard* of the Spartacist group.... Upon reading the articles on the Iranian Revolution in both of their newspapers, one cannot help but wonder aloud, 'In what police academies did these writers complete their educations?'"

"If the antics of the Spartacist were directly orchestrated by the FBI and CIA, they could not be more provocative. And, in fact, there is every reason to believe that they are...."

As everyone knows, the SWP is second only to the Healyites themselves in its slavish enthusiasm over the Khomeini "revolution". But the *Bulletin* was compelled to create the SWP's Iran line out of whole cloth in order to support the following grotesque, paranoid schema, which carries forward the IC's four-year old campaign of scurrilous slander to smear Joseph Hansen and the US SWP as accomplices in the assassination of Trotsky:

"[The SL] is a small sect that was set up by the late Joseph Hansen, the proven FBI agent who for many years ran the Socialist Workers Party, for the specific purpose of organizing provocations against the International Committee of the Fourth International, and in the United States, against the Workers League."

These vile slanders are intended to provide a "political" cover for physical gangsterism against the SL, befitting the Qaddafi henchmen who applauded the Iraqi colonels' execution of communist militants and who now endorse Khomeini's butchery of Kurdish nationalists in the name of preserving the territorial integrity of "Iran, Iraq and Syria, all centers of anti-imperialist revolutionary activity". These tools of the capitalist Arab dictators -- the worst

enemies of the Arab working masses -- will stop at nothing to still the voice of authentic Trotskyism.

But we will not be silenced. On 6 May trade unionists and supporters of the SL/US held protest pickets outside WL meetings in Oakland, California and New York City (called ostensibly in celebration of May Day) to demand, "Defend workers democracy against WL provocation!" Re-affirming the Spartacist tendency's commitment to defend workers democracy for all tendencies in the workers movement, not only the SWP and the Stalinists but also ourselves, the protesters raised such chants and slogans as: "WL cheers as Iraqi Ba'athists murder Communists", "Khomeini attacks 'satanic Marxism' -- WL hails Khomeini", "Healyites: From political bandits on the left to pimps for Qaddafi", "Gangsterism and slander -- hallmark of provocateurs", "For the rebirth of the Fourth International".

The Healyites' shameless apologetics for anti-communist murder came in response to a few articles in the British CP paper, *Morning Star* detailing the execution in May of last year of 21 members of the Iraqi CP on charges of forming cells within the army and the imprisonment of some 15,000 party members. Though the pro-Moscow

Stalinists still seek friendly relations with the Baghdad butchers, they are obliged to go through the motions of protesting against the persecution of their Iraqi comrades. For the messengers of Qaddafi, this was "A Conspiracy Exposed" (*News Line*, 2 February):

"At the obvious instigation of the Kremlin, the Communist Party of Great Britain has become the centre of an immense slander offensive against the bastion of the Arab Revolution -- the Republic of Iraq and its revolutionary vanguard, the Arab Ba'athist Socialist Party...."

"It is true that 21 CP members were executed early last year for illegally forming cells in the armed forces. The purpose of these cells was to fight against the government. There are no prizes for the answer to what would happen to Ba'athists who set up cells in the Soviet army. They would be ruthlessly purged!"

This atrocity produced visible revulsion in the WRP periphery. The 8 March *News Line* prints a letter from a trade unionist who writes in shocked disbelief:

"Are readers of the News Line to conclude that you actually support the murder of members of
Continued on page seven

editorial notes

IS joins PLO cheer squad

As the Eureka-flag-bearing Maoist contingent passed through Melbourne's May Day rally on 6 May, the Third Camp International Socialists (IS) joined in chanting "Socialism yes, nationalism no!" Yet, with a contrast that left even some ISers a bit sheepish, moments later they were chanting "PLO, PLO, PLO", vicariously cheering on the unabashedly petty-bourgeois nationalist Palestine Liberation Organisation. It was all the more remarkable given the IS's longstanding position on the Middle East which, though a liberal-workerist imitation of Trotskyism, at least stated plainly that "victory of either side (Zionists and Arab governments) in the Middle East will not advance the struggle of the Palestinians or create a just solution".

The explanation for the apparent contradiction and the seeming embarrassment of the ISers was simple. Opportunity had knocked, in the form of the "United Lebanese Communist Party", who the 17 February *Battler* had noted being guests at the IS summer camp and who marched conspicuously in a joint contingent with the IS at the Sydney May Day rally. So, pursuing the only political "principle" these endemic opportunists recognise, the IS has naturally changed its line to support of Arab nationalism in order to cosy up to this new opportunity.

Tom O'Lincoln, veteran IS leader, started the ball rolling last October with an internal document entitled, "Why we need to change our Middle East position". Steering clear of the real reason, O'Lincoln nevertheless explained that as author of the original position, he found it a "little embarrassing" "to tear it apart". Embarrassing is the appropriate word for his document. O'Lincoln did not even pretend to justify support for the bourgeois Arab armies on the absurd grounds that they might actually fight for the national rights of the Palestinian masses, affirming even more absurdly that: "Pan-Arabism is a thoroughly progressive impulse posing as it does the need for social organisation beyond existing boundaries". Having thus established the road to revolutionary consciousness for the Arab masses through enlisting as cannon fodder in the armies of the sheiks and the bonapartist colonels, O'Lincoln then dismissed the necessity of having to defend Hebrew national rights: "Does anyone in I.S. believe that the Arab workers and peasants, once imbued with revolutionary consciousness, would butcher the Jews?"

Trotskyists give no support to either Zionism or Arab nationalism and take a revolutionary-defeatist stance to the conflict between the Arab and Israeli bourgeoisies. We recognise that the conflicting national rights of the interpenetrated Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples can only be democratically resolved through Hebrew/Arab workers revolution. IS leaders Dave

Nadel and Alec Kahn, defending the old IS position, naturally failed to recognise that self-determination for both Palestinian and Hebrew peoples necessitated a revolutionary solution and exhibited a workerist softness on Jewish anti-Arabism. Still, they hit the mark in scoring "Tom's hymn of praise for pan-Arab nationalism" for scarcely even mentioning the question of Palestinian self-determination and labelling it "truly Third Worldism gone mad" (*IS National News*, November 1978):

"The proposed new policy is deeply and fundamentally class-collaborationist -- it applauds the wars (1948, 1973) launched by the Arab ruling classes using the Palestinians as a pretext; it capitulates to the suicidal PLO strategy of reliance on the Arab ruling class; and it leaves the Israeli working class fair and square in the arms of the Zionist bosses."

Such was the IS's rush to sidle up to Arab nationalism that the National Committee last October even refused longstanding leader Nadel's request for a discussion at the upcoming summer camp -- how could they have invited their new-found comrades, after all? Class collaborationism? Capitulation? Sounds like the IS to us. ■

SWP backs sexual puritanism

Back in the middle of last year's gay rights defence campaign in Sydney, the fake Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), true to form, were outdoing even the most anti-communist gay lifestyle lists in their "consistent" sectoralist parochialism. Our insistence that democratic rights for homosexuals could only be defended through a mobilisation of the working class -- that an exclusionist, class-collaborationist, "independent" gay movement was a powerless dead-end -- was slanderously dismissed as an adaptation to backward consciousness. No, argued the SWP, gays must organise "free from the control [!] of non-homosexuals". After all, "it is only homosexuals who understand the oppression we face" (*Direct Action* supplement to the Fourth National Homosexual Conference, 24 August 1978).

One could be excused for wondering, then, when the paper of its US mentor, the US SWP's *Militant* (13 April), comes out for a "class-struggle road to winning gay rights" and rubbishes "the illusion that the fight for gay rights will be carried out by a 'gay movement' assumed to consist of individuals of the same sex". A turn to Trotskyism? Fat chance. With the
Continued on page six

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.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Len Meyers (managing editor), Inga Smith (production manager), Chris Korwin, David Reynolds.

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Toni Somers.

Published monthly, except January. Printed by trade union labour. Registered at the GPO, Sydney for posting as a publication -- Category B. Subscriptions \$3 for 11 issues; airmail \$5 for 11 issues (except Europe/North America), \$10 for 11 issues (Europe/North America). Address all correspondence to: Spartacist Publications, GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001. Telephone (02) 235-8115.

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

Printed by Eastern Suburbs, Randwick, NSW.

Deer Hunter lies... and SWP loves it

The first Vietnamese to appear on the screen in Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* wears the red star of the North Vietnamese (DRV) army. The camera follows him through a flame-enveloped jungle village littered with charred corpses, the scene of a US helicopter attack. Lifting the bamboo covering off a shallow bomb shelter crammed with Vietnamese women and children, he coolly tosses in a live hand grenade and runs.

The scene shifts to bamboo cages submerged in a rat-infested river. The prisoners are American GIs, including the three hometown buddies, steelworkers, whom we have gotten to know during the first half of the film: Michael, Nick and Steve. The captors: NLF guerrillas, who dredge up their prisoners only to subject them to a hideous torture/sport of Russian roulette. As each of the friends in turn raises the half-loaded revolver to his temple, Cimino's camera scans the laughing faces of the "VC" -- enrapt in betting on the bloody outcome of the "game" -- and lingers momentarily on a wall portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The three finally escape when Michael succeeds in grabbing a machine gun and mows down his sadistic torturers.

Who tortured who?

The sadistic, systematic and methodical tortures; the bamboo "tiger cages"; the massacres of Vietnamese villagers; the prisoners whose brains were blown out -- these things all happened. *But it was the other way around.* That knowledge radicalised an entire generation of leftists. It was the US which organised Project "Counter-Terror", the Phoenix program, the "strategic hamlets" -- the most widespread and systematic campaign of civilian terror based on torture since Nazi Germany.

There are in fiction what can be called distortions, subtle fabrications, imaginative constructs -- and there are lies. *The Deer Hunter* lies. And so it must, or it could not portray the Americans as the good guys in Vietnam. With a
US SWP



SWP social patriotism (Fred Halstead in photo at left) vs SL revolutionary internationalism in US antiwar movement.



technique more insidious even than Goebbels' Cimino has consciously selected the very images which galvanised the antiwar movement and turned them inside out. And where *The Green Berets* failed more than a decade ago -- necessarily, because the truth was too close -- *The Deer Hunter* has succeeded: it has moved American audiences to actively cheer for the American military fighting the Vietnam war.

Why the SWP likes *The Deer Hunter*

Yet the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), whose American co-thinkers pride themselves as the "best builders" of the US antiwar movement, lauds this profoundly, consciously reactionary film as a "subtle and immensely revealing work" -- "Not another 'Green Berets'" -- and Cimino as an artist whose "talent for accurate observation" has led him to "expose truths" he may himself not have recognised (*Direct Action*, 26 April). Bizarre? Yes, but how else is the SWP to deny that its "objectively anti-imperialist" antiwar movement could leave in its wake a political generation which, to quote SWP reviewer Renfrey Clarke, is "packing out the cinemas to have their approval of imperialist warmongering restored".

"Cimino's statements on the Vietnam war are ambiguous", says Clarke. "But we are made to hate the conflict for the tragedy it inflicts on the film's heroes". *What about the tragedy US imperialism's "heroes" inflicted on the Vietnamese in*

the course of that filthy, counterrevolutionary war? Neither Cimino nor Clarke even mention it. Cimino can lead his audiences to cheer the imperialists today because the US SWP and the bourgeois liberals led them to believe then that the imperialist war could be opposed without fighting imperialism and solidarising with its victims. Now, to whitewash the SWP's reformist treachery, Clarke is compelled to whitewash Cimino's reactionary propaganda.

In what could be a parody of workerist social patriotism, Clarke applauds "the impassioned camaraderie of the steelworkers ... as a powerful, if politically undeveloped, working-class solidarity". Clarke might just as well label a pack rape by working-class youth as "impassioned camaraderie". "Kill a few for me" is the parting farewell of one of their co-workers; and Michael kills more than a few NLF in expressing his "class solidarity" for Nick and Steve.

When Michael, the Hemingway-style deer hunter who kills them with "one shot", refuses to shoot a stag he has sighted following his return from the war, Clarke hails it as a pacifist "rejection ... of the old habits and assumptions". But Cimino's heroes have learned nothing and rejected nothing -- even as the screen fades, Michael is still wearing his bemedalled military uniform. Prepared by his role as leader of the hunt, he is the only one to survive the war intact -- a symbol not of pacifist weakness, as Clarke would have it, but of military strength, the *Übermensch*. Only as solitary hunter in the primal grandeur of the mountains can Michael engage in sport without blood.

Clarke finds another "rejection" -- "the tarnished platitudes of patriotism" -- in the final scene. Driven to madness and heroin by his experience of torture, Nick finally blows his brains out (with "one shot") playing Russian roulette for money in Saigon. His friends, gathered together after the funeral, spontaneously break into a mournful version of "God Bless
Workers Vanguard



The *Deer Hunter* lies: NLF captors throwing GI into tiger cage. Cimino wants his audiences to unlearn the truth.

Only from a pacifist standpoint which *subordinated* support for the NLF to ending the "violence" is it possible even to conceive of this scene as being hostile to the war. It is violently, unambiguously hostile to the NLF.

The lies of the SWP

Clarke's lying review of *The Deer Hunter* is conditioned by and predicated on a far bigger lie -- that the SWP came to the defence of the Vietnamese revolution. The bourgeois liberals came to oppose the war because it was a *losing* war, a misappropriation of American resources, a threat to the "moral fibre" of the nation -- "our boys" were returning home in boxes or strung out on heroin. And the US SWP tagged along -- deliberately, consciously, treacherously tailoring its line to appeal to a defeatist wing of the US bourgeoisie.

To stay in the liberal-pacifist Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee in 1965 they joined the social patriots in denying that this war was waged to defend imperialism, arguing only that it was "not necessary for national security" and could not "enhance the honor of the American people". "I'm personally for bringing the troops home", said Fred Halstead, SWP and Parade Committee spokesman. "But as for victory for the NLF, I don't know; I'm not Vietnamese."

For the SWP, victory or defeat for the NLF didn't matter. What mattered was "That the vast majority of Americans are firmly opposed to squandering more of our [!] resources, or spilling more blood, in Southeast Asia" (*Militant*, 23 May 1975). And to justify its popular-frontist betrayal of international class solidarity, the SWP lied. Bourgeois defeatism was dubbed "anti-imperialism"; social patriotism became "internationalism"; "defence of the Vietnamese revolution" was equated with building the respectably "peaceful, legal" peace crawls; and, the struggle for genuine class solidarity was written off as "abstentionism".

Thanks in part to the misleadership of the US SWP, happily marching to "Bring our boys home", the American antiwar movement in its mass never

Continued on page seven

America". "But there is nothing of the usual arrogant nationalist swagger about the song", crows Clarke. Indeed! Saigon had just fallen to the NLF: what was there to swagger about? These "boys" had come home demoralised and beaten, not victorious heroes. *In reality*, the US troops in Vietnam sensed they were fighting for Imperialism USA, not Hometown USA, and patriotism went out the window. But by Cimino's own admission, this scene was not intended as irony.

Cimino leaves no doubt that in his view the American defeat was a sign of weakness. This film is an ode to "what we once were and will be again", he says (*National Times*, 2 June). He wants to refurbish the "tarnished platitudes", to convince his audience that the NLF *deserved* to be defeated. The guerrillas depicted by Cimino in the torture scene which is at the structural centre of *The Deer Hunter* are the racist, anti-communist incarnation of "the VC" who, conscripts were told, would "nail your dogtags to your foreheads and send it home to Mother". This scene is the biggest lie, and it has gotten the biggest cheers. And Clarke cheers along with the rest:

"Although the episode prejudices [!] the audience against the Viet Cong, who are seen as having been brutalised by the war, its dramatic purpose is to develop themes which are hostile to the US intervention. In particular ... the theme of arbitrary violence...."

Marxist working-class fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US.

Issue no 230 includes in-depth review of *The Deer Hunter*.

Single issue - 25 cents

Order from, pay to: Spartacist League, GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

Subscribe!

24 issues: US \$12 (airmail) US \$3 (surface)

Order from/pay to: Spartacist League, GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Workers Must Rule Iran!

Down With All the Ayatollahs!

NO TO THE VEIL

Down with Khomeini!

Workers Vanguard in LEAD

Farina Khalil tells the Truth on Iran

23

"In Islamic society, women are not considered human beings. I remember when I was a young girl and went to class to study the Koran. I was told that if I did not cover my head, I would go to hell and every strand of my hair would turn into long snakes.... It is no accident that when Khomeini took power he immediately outlawed abortion and imposed the chador. What he is trying to do is control the masses under the 'Islamic spirit'. The veil is a symbol of women's oppression under Islam and an instrument of that control." - Fatima Khalil.

On 5 May, Fatima Khalil concluded a three-week coast-to-coast tour across the US. Over 1000 people in ten cities turned out to hear this Near Eastern Communist woman of Muslim origin sound a cry of alarm over the threat to the Iranian masses under Ayatollah Khomeini's new Islamic order. Sponsored by the US Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL), the highly successful tour was a subject of attention both from the bourgeois media -- and from Khomeini's fanatical supporters in the US, whose attempts to stop Khalil from telling the truth about the "Islamic revolution" even included cowardly anonymous death threats. Over one hundred trade unionists from 25 different unions across the country volunteered to defend Khalil's right to speak and uphold workers democracy.

Khalil was interviewed by two radio stations in Chicago and radio and TV in Detroit. Papers in a number of cities, including two major bourgeois dailies -- the *Detroit News* and the influential *San Francisco Chronicle* -- ran features on her vivid description of the centuries-old oppression of women which the reactionary Khomeini regime seeks to enforce in Iran today -- and the communist program to fight it.

Wherever she went Comrade Khalil stressed the urgent need to draw the lessons of Khomeini's orders to reimpose the veil, the massacre of Kurds, execution of homosexuals and round-up of Fedayeen militants under the new Islamic republic. "There are people who claim that what is going on in Teheran today is the Iranian February Revolution", she said. "But it has been clear to us from the beginning that Khomeini was in no sense progressive." Her message to the American left: the working class must lead the women, national minorities and peasants in revolutionary struggle against the Muslim clerical reactionaries now in power in Iran. The alternative, becoming clearer day by day, is theocratic barbarism. Khalil also emphasised the immediate need to mount a united-front defence of the left and all those democratic secular forces who are increasingly coming under attack from the mullahs.

Just as the mullahs have been suppressing the left in Iran, their Iranian supporters in the US have attempted to suppress the communist truth about the mullahs' reactionary aims. Five times in the six months before Comrade Khalil's tour, "Long Live Khomeini" has rung out from Khomeini supporters and their Maoist acolytes as these mullah lovers have pounded on the doors of SL/SYL forums, screamed at the speakers and spat, clawed and charged at our comrades. But these people forgot one thing -- the mullahs don't hold state power in America.

In early April some seventy fanatics of the Organisation of Iranian Muslim Students (OIMS) besieged an SYL forum featuring speaker DL Reissner, editor of *Women and Revolution*, at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor -- surrounding the entrances, spitting out SYLers, cursing the speaker as a "slut", and harassing members of the audience out into the parking lot. Finally they provoked a confrontation with the SYL defence marshals which left a dozen of the mullah thugs on the ground. Not satisfied the apostles of Khomeini joined with the local Stalinists to use this incident to get the SYL's

US tour a smashing success



Fatima Khalil tells the truth on Iran

organisational status and right to use university facilities suspended -- just before Comrade Khalil was due to appear. Within 48 hours more than 150 people representing a broad range of campus organisations had signed a petition demanding that the charges be dismissed and the fine dropped, that the SYL's rights be restored and Fatima Khalil be allowed to speak. The university administration and student bureaucrats quickly backed down.

The next night those attending the forum were met at the elevator by five burly trade unionists who assured them of their safety. At the entrance another team searched all participants and escorted them to their seats. Inside the hall the chief marshal announced that the defence squad, made up of members of seven trade unions, would ensure equal time for all to speak, including those defending the viewpoint of the Islamic clergy. However, noting that if such a meeting were held in Teheran Khomeini would have the Marxists shot, he warned: "If they try to disrupt this meeting here, they will get a fist in the face". There were no takers.

"I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE"

For the SL/SYL the decision to bring Comrade Khalil on this speaking tour was based on the understanding that the dramatic situation in Iran today poses a major test for the entire working-class movement, just as did the Chilean popular front in the early seventies. At that time the Spartacist League stood alone in refusing to give political support to Allende's class-collaborationist government that paved the way for the bloody Pinochet coup. Now once again the SL has acted as a beacon on the left by uniquely opposing the rise of Islamic reaction with our now-famous slogan, "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!" Aggressive propagandistic exploitation of the correctness of our

Marxist program in this crucial test can lay the basis for a new wave of recruitment for the international Spartacist tendency. In the words of one SL supporter in Ann Arbor who explained that he "used to be in a homosexual communist grouping ... and I say that Ayatollah Khomeini is nothing but Anita Bryant with a beard and a turban":

"Why do we hold these forums? Because we are looking for a few Iranians with guts, with the guts to stand up and say they are for the democratic rights of all the people -- national minorities, homosexuals, women."

In several of the meetings there were polemical exchanges with mullah supporters, including the slanderous litany that all Trotskyists were "CIA" and "SAVAK agents". One Muslim woman in Detroit who had denounced the speaker for daring to criticise Khomeini revealed the class basis of her views when she retorted: "Women are free in Iran. My mother drives a Mercedes".

This comment adequately reflects the real social composition of the large Iranian student population in the US. Mostly the sons and daughters of the small bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie training to become Iran's technical elite, their hoped-for future is in the ministries and leading industrial posts in Khomeini's Iran. Similarly the Maoist sympathies of the various wings of the Iranian Student Association is based not so much on an affinity with the proletariat and the oppressed but rather anti-Soviet nationalism and the belief that the "bourgeois" stage of the Maoist/Stalinist two-stage schema of revolution will catapult them into power.

By no means all the Iranians present sided with the Islamic fanatics and Stalinists who had disrupted earlier SL/SYL forums. Significantly, those who spoke in favour of Spartacist positions were mainly women and members of oppressed nationalities. Thus one woman in Chicago remarked during the discussion period:

"As an Iranian woman I would like to thank the Spartacist League for being the only organisation to see the class analysis of Iran, saying that Khomeini was never a progressive and what an Islamic state would mean for the workers and women in particular."

NO TO THE VEIL! FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION!

Centring her talk on the oppression of women under Islam historically, under the shah and now under Khomeini, Khalil pointed out that according to Muslim law women do not have rights as human beings:

"When they are young they are dependent on their fathers; when they get married they belong to their husbands. On a legal basis two women are considered equal to one male witness. And in the village young women -- children, really -- are often exchanged for animals....

"The Koran says if you show your finger to a strange man, you have to cut it off. Because



US press coverage of Fatima Khalil tour highlighted SL's unique Trotskyist line on Iran.

it doesn't belong to your husband any more, therefore it doesn't belong to you."

The bourgeois revolution meant a great deal for women, she stressed -- namely, they were considered to be human beings.

Comrade Khalil's forums exposed the reactionary political implications of religion, a rather unfamiliar theme for American leftists, who are more accustomed to see racism and nationalism as the predominant reactionary ideologies. Islam is not unique in its denigration of women. The difference between the role of religion in Khomeini's Iran and its reactionary ideological function in the advanced capitalist societies of the West is the *bourgeois revolution* which established secularised states. In Khomeini's Iran the anti-woman precepts of the Koran automatically acquire the force of law.

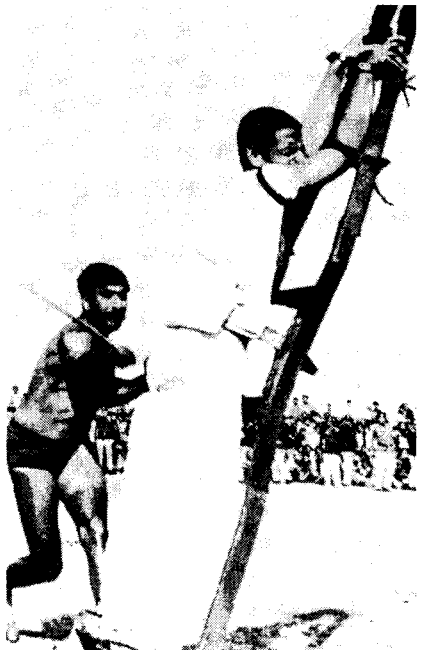
"NOT MAN AGAINST WOMAN..."

In New York City Khalil was also invited to give a brief presentation at a talk by American feminist Kate Millet, who recently had a first-hand taste of Khomeini's reaction when she was expelled from Iran after participating in the mass protest against the veil on International Women's Day. Although shaken by her experience, as a feminist Millet's limp conclusion was that only women can liberate themselves. In contrast, Khalil insisted that "the fight is not man against woman... What is needed is a revolutionary party which can change the social order".

As the only real example of the emancipation of women from the medieval oppression of the Koran, Khalil's forums pointed to the early Bolshevik work among women of the Soviet East. Laws against forced marriage, early marriage and polygamy were actually effective, in contrast to the showcase reforms of bourgeois nationalists like Ataturk. And communist women organisers were murdered for their fight against the veil. "In those mass meetings which many Islamic women took part in, they burned their veils. They were the first supporters of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia."

WHO TOLD THE TRUTH ON IRAN?

Comrade Khalil also polemicised against those so-called "leftists" who uncritically hailed the ayatollahs and who today stand confused, deeply compromised and politically bankrupt. The workers movement will not forget those who, in



Public flogging in Pakistan under Islamic rule of General Zia.

their penchant for tailing anything popular, ended up singing the praises of Islamic reaction:

"The leader of the British International Marxist Group said that when he was in Iran he chanted the slogan, *allah akbar*, which means 'god is great'. He said this slogan is revolutionary because it is the slogan of the Iranian masses. But for us it is clear that this slogan belongs to Islam. Today in Iran, when the Islamic soldiers kill Kurdish fighters, they chant '*allah akbar*'. In 1974 when the Turkish army invaded Cyprus, when they were massacring the Greek people, they were chanting '*allah akbar*'. This slogan means one thing -- Islamic reaction. That slogan belongs to them, not us."

At the conclusion of one of the forums a black woman comrade of the Spartacist League summed up the significance of the events in Iran as a test for the international left:

"The international Spartacist tendency told the truth *before* Khomeini stepped into power, before the blood was laid on the ground, before the corpses rolled in the streets. We were baited for opposing the 'progressive' forces. Only it turned out they weren't so progressive after all. We seek to intervene in the struggle in Iran because we are internationalists -- we defend our class brothers who only stand to lose under Islamic reaction. That's why we say, 'Down with Khomeini, For Workers Revolution in Iran!'" ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 230, 27 April 1979)

Iranian left...

Continued from page one

military force that will impose both Islamic rule and continued Persian domination.

The death toll has mounted to the thousands over the past months as the central government and its supporters have fought to crush demands for "autonomy" by Turkoman and Kurdish rebels. In recent weeks fighting has also broken out between Khomeini-loyal Persian gangs and minority Arabs in the port of Khorramshahr, in the oil-rich southwestern province of Khuzistan.

The most dramatic battle, and a portent of things to come, occurred during March between Kurdish nationalists, themselves Sunni Muslims, and Khomeini forces in the provincial city of Sanandaj. After initial clashes the Imam himself denounced the heretics and called upon his mullah militia to aid the police and army to "smash the bandits". When subsequent protests met rifle fire from troops, an enraged Kurdish population stormed Sanandaj's police headquarters and radio and television stations and besieged the local garrison of 2000 men. Khomeini immediately came to their rescue with helicopter gunships which strafed the streets, slaughtering several hundred Kurds. But despite their courageous military support in these battles, the Fedayeen have subordinated themselves to "moderate" holy men and tribal chiefs among the Kurds who are prepared to accept the authority of Khomeini's Islamic Republic in return for a greater share of local government posts.

Proletarian revolutionists in Iran must fight for the right of self-determination -- the right to form separate states -- for the oppressed nations within Iran. But military support to the struggles of the national minorities against Persian chauvinism must be coupled with a political struggle not only against Persian nationalism but against Azerbaijani, Kurdish or Baluchi nationalism as well, posing at every point the class independence of the toilers from their "own" exploiters.

For Leninists, the right of self-determination applies to *all* nations, not simply those whose nationalist leaders are "good" or whose aid comes from "clean" sources. Not so for the fake left. When Kurdish leader Barzani reached a temporary accommodation with the CIA and the shah in the early 1970s, directed against "anti-imperialist" Iraq, those like the Stalinists or the Healyite Socialist Labour League denied the legitimacy of the Kurds' national rights. The fake-Trotskyist followers of the "United Secretariat" (today organised in the Socialist Workers Party -- the HKS) simply placed it in question. Undoubtedly referring to Israel, whose Hebrew-speaking people are also denied the right of self-determination in the name of the "Arab revolution", Iranian Mandelite Azar Namji pointedly asked (in a 1973 internal bulletin), "Can the Arab Revolution Afford Another Garrison State in Kurdistan?"

A COWARDLY CAPITULATION

The situation in Iran today cries out for a united-front defence of the left and all secular-democratic forces under attack by the mullahs and their "Islamic marshals". Yet only a break with the suicidal policy of giving support -- "critical" of otherwise -- to the "Imam" Khomeini can make possible this independent mobilisation of the working class and its allies. The fake-Trotskyists of the HKS have made it abundantly clear that they do not stand for such a policy of proletarian opposition to the Khomeini regime -- *never once* raising the call for workers revolution against Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Instead these Iranian brethren of the reformist US and Australian SWPs have responded to the clerical anti-communist offensive by shamefully cringing before the mullahs.

The 5 May edition of the ill-fated *Ayandegan* carried an HKS statement on the assassination of Motahari which categorically declared, "The terrorist attack on Ayatollah Motahari was a counterrevolutionary act. It was an act against the toilers. The consequences of it can only be harmful to their interests" (*Intercontinental Press* [IP] 21 May). The HKS used the traditional Marxist criticism of individual terror as an "orthodox" figleaf for *solidarising* with the mullahs: "Reaffirming this historic position, we deplore the assassination of Ayatollah Motahari and express our sorrow at his death."

It is precisely Islamic reactionaries like Motahari, for whom the HKS feels "sorrow", that are mobilising against the Iranian proletariat! As a member of Khomeini's secret Revolutionary Council Motahari was responsible for the arrest of leftists, attacks on women's rights and the massacring of Kurdish civilians. Certainly the Forghan's assassination campaign served as a pretext for the mullahs' stepped-up campaign against the left. But when the "Islamic Republic" is dispersing the protests of the unemployed, breaking up the factory committees, attempting to disarm the masses and suppress the national minorities, it is positively obscene to

single out the assassination of Motahari, an enemy of the Iranian toilers, as a counter-revolutionary act. Unlike the HKS we do not mourn the class enemy!

This incident speaks volumes for these fake Trotskyists' supposed new-found "opposition" to Khomeini and the mullahs. IP writer Gerry Foley's communiques from Teheran blithely dismiss the *jihad* mentality being fanned against the left as the work of isolated rightists, claiming that the religious leaders "are beginning to lose their tenuous political grip on the masses" (IP, 7 May). Fools and reformists never learn! Six months ago the SWP was claiming that the movement which was firmly in the grip of the mullahs was a "progressive" movement against the shah essentially free of the mullahs' influence.

Today in the pages of the SWP's press there no longer appear the sophistic attempts to paint Khomeini as a transitory Father Gapon-like figure or the Kerensky of the "Iranian Revolution". Instead we read that it is under the "banner" of the "Islamic Republic" that "the most fundamental rights of the Iranian masses have been subjected to successive assaults" (IP, 2 April). Is that the same "Islamic Republic" which US SWP head Barry Sheppard claimed was perceived by Iranian workers as synonymous with a "workers and farmers republic"? Following the SWP's line on Iran can be truly dizzying -- every new event requires a new modification, a new *falsification*.

Taking a cue in parliamentary cretinism from their US mentors the HKS is now plugging a "Bill of Rights for the Workers and Toilers of Iran", proffered up as the "new constitution" for the constituent assembly. "The formation of a government based on that constitution", they claim, "will be a government that represents and defends the interests of the exploited and oppressed". But treacherous as this "peaceful road to socialism" is, it is all the more ludicrous when based on the illusion that the mullahs' victory ushered in a period of bourgeois democracy. How could they, without admitting that the "revolution" they tailed was in no way "anti-imperialist", nor even bourgeois-democratic.

KHOMEINI - MORTAL ENEMY OF THE WORKING CLASS

Khomeini's government has made many enemies in its short few months of existence -- to be a critic of the regime today doesn't mean much. But who was it that sounded the warning -- to the women now being stoned, flogged and forced back into the veil and Islamic "modesty"; to the national minorities now being massacred in the provinces; to the workers and the left, that Khomeini's "anti-imperialism" was nothing but anti-Western puritanism in the service of medieval-clerical reaction and that an Islamic Republic would be their mortal enemy -- *before the mullahs took power*? We will not let the workers movement forget those like the SWP who backed Khomeini "as a symbol of the struggle" (IP, 18 December 1978), who alibied the veil as a "symbol of resistance", who trumpeted the mullahs' ascension to power as a "victory", and who glorified as pre-soviet formations the mullah-run neighbourhood committees (in which women are not allowed to speak!).

The overwhelmingly pro-Islam, pro-Khomeini character of the anti-shah demonstrations under the control of the mullahs and the program of clerical reaction of a future Islamic republic was recognised by almost everyone but the fake left -- who in turn denied, prettified and just lied about the mullah-led opposition to get close to "the action", vilifying those who told the truth as echoing the shah's and imperialist propaganda.

One can only despise the self-seeking deceit and covering up of the reformists. Khomeini has betrayed no one. He is carrying out what he had promised all along: the construction of a Persian chauvinist Muslim theocracy. Yet the international Spartacist tendency remains unique in its intransigent opposition to Khomeini.

And the Fedayeen? Facing the horrible possibility of another Indonesia 1965, they have only added a few more spotlights, sandbags and guards at their Teheran headquarters. One of their leaders told *Newsweek*, "If necessary, we will go underground as we did before. We do not want civil war. We want more time". But time is running out and the alternative to class war is their annihilation, unresisting, at the hands of Muslim reaction.

Only a program of proletarian independence can prevent another catastrophic defeat for the Iranian proletariat: For a united front of all left, working-class and secular-democratic forces for defence against Khomeini's Islamic sword! For workers militias based on factory committees and trade unions! Full democratic rights for women! For the right of self-determination for the national minorities! Land to the tiller! For a secular constituent assembly! For a socialist revolution in Iran to establish an Iranian workers and peasants government! For an Iranian Trotskyist party! ■

(adapted from Workers Vanguard no 231, 11 May 1979)

Puritanism...

Continued from page two

decline of the feminist and gay liberation milieus, these erstwhile "best builders" of sectoralist illusions have indeed taken a "turn" -- followed in lock-step fashion by their Australian acolytes -- to doing the donkey work for bureaucratic hopefuls like the US Steelworkers' Ed Sadowski.

The trade-union bureaucracy, the transmission belt for backward bourgeois ideology into the working class, couldn't care less about a "class-struggle road to winning gay rights" -- or anything else. Nor could the SWP, the "class-struggle" figleaf notwithstanding. Reporting on a resolution raised at a Philadelphia gay liberation conference these yellow socialists sneer

with malicious vehemence: "The repeal of age-of-consent laws is a reactionary demand [whose] advocates ... are primarily adult men who believe they should be unrestricted in having sex with children". Significantly the article does not even mention a parallel campaign by open reactionaries to repeal the recent controversial reform of New Jersey's age-of-consent laws. In loathsome parallel with Mary Whitehouse, Anita Bryant et al, the SWP equates all cross-generational sex with "child molesting" and rails: "We don't want laws against child labor changed to simply outlaw vaguely defined 'abusive' child labor. Nor do we want 'non-abusive consensual' sex by adults with children OK'd". Age-of-consent laws, says the *Militant*, are "historic acquisitions of the working class and should be enforced".

What then of the Toronto Morality Squad who in late 1977 enforced these "historic acquisitions

of the working class" when they raised and shut down the Canadian gay magazine *Body Politic* for its "Men Loving Boys Loving Men" issue? And where does the SWP stand on Roman Polanski, who was threatened with jail by a bigoted US judge and driven into exile for his affair with a 13-year-old girl? In the real world, age-of-consent laws are not used to prevent child abuse -- as the SWP claims -- but to victimise practitioners of what ruling-class morality damns as "unnatural" sex and to send sexually precocious kids to reform schools. The reality of supporting such laws means putting the punitive powers of the capitalist state behind the nuclear family and its oppressive restrictions on the rights of women, young people and homosexuals. And the *Militant* article ignores the arena of the most widespread and brutal child abuse -- including sexual molestation -- which is in the home, the nuclear family.

Not surprisingly, the SWP's "turn" to socially backward workerism is causing some commotion among its membership. Several homosexual members of the Canadian Revolutionary Workers League (RWL -- the SWP's co-thinkers), already deeply disgruntled with their organisation's efforts to squelch their lifestyle politics, simply walked out of the RWL at or soon after an RWL conference which took place at the time the *Militant* article appeared. But those who are now shocked by the SWP's defence of conventional sexual moralism would do well to note that in the 1960s, prior to the eruption of "gay power" politics, the US SWP's practice was to quietly drop from membership individuals discovered to be homosexuals.

We do not deny the alienation and brutality that seeps into every aspect of capitalist society, not least sexuality. But there is no reason to assume -- as does the SWP -- that a significant disparity in age between sexual partners is particularly likely to lead to sexual abuse. We do not join the church and the social neanderthals (and the SWP) in placing a taboo on the sexuality of children and youth. The revolutionary Marxist attitude to such attitudes was clearly laid out in our defence of Polanski:

"As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed 'norms'. The guiding principle for sexual relations should be that of effective consent -- that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. We hold that any and all consensual relations between individuals are purely their own concern, and the state has no business interfering." (*Workers Vanguard* no 192, 10 February 1978) ■

SWP refuses Iran debate

Two weeks after the following letter was submitted to the Sydney branch of the Socialist Workers Party, an SWP spokesman finally admitted in a telephone conversation that the SWP was "not interested" in accepting our debate challenge. As is self-evident from the SWP positions outlined below, its disinterest is in fact a cover for political cowardice.

14 May 1979

Socialist Workers Party

Comrades:

As with Chile in 1971-73 and Portugal in 1974-75, the events in Iran today are of world-historic importance, posing a decisive test for organisations claiming the banner of revolutionary Marxism. The mass women's protests in March against Khomeini's attempts to reimpose the wearing of the veil upon Iranian women and the continuing struggles of Iran's national minorities against the oppressive "Islamic republic" in Teheran are proof that the Muslim theocracy has yet to consolidate its rule. The avenue for a proletarian revolutionary perspective in Iran is not yet closed.

The course such a perspective necessitates, the strategic tasks confronting proletarian militants in Iran, has rightly been the subject of intense debate within the left internationally. The programs advocated by our two tendencies in particular, despite the Socialist Workers Party's professed adherence to a Trotskyist position, have been sharply and fundamentally counterposed. Indeed, at a forum in the US last March, your co-thinker Barry Sheppard expressed the view that the Spartacist tendency and the SWP "would be shooting at each other in Iran". Furthermore members and supporters of the SWP here have on numerous occasions objected to "slanders" in our polemics against the SWP line on Iran, implicitly recognising that such charges, if vindicated, pointed to major betrayals of the revolutionary program by the SWP and its co-thinkers in the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS). The necessity for political clarity on this question could not be more urgent. It is from this standpoint that we challenge the SWP to a formal, public debate on Iran.

It is no accident that the SWP has thus far systematically avoided any debate with us on Iran. Your positions are indefensible from the standpoint of Trotskyism -- and even from the standpoint of consistent bourgeois democracy. Little more than a year ago your American co-thinkers polemicised against the slogan of "Down with the shah", raised among others by the Spartacist tendency, as "ultimatistic" and "ultraleft" (*Militant*, 13 January 1978). With the advent of the mullah-led masses onto the Iranian political stage, you came to characterise Khomeini's "opposition to the shah's 'modernization'" as "progressive".

At the same time as we raised the alarm about the explicitly anti-woman and anti-working-class aims of the mullah-led movement, SWP publications conspicuously refused to report that the mullah-led protests prominently featured slogans like "Death or the veil". While you hailed the "Iranian revolution" which installed the mullahs in power, we declared that it was "not a victory for the working masses. Today, Iran belongs to middle-class Islamic reaction..." Only days before the mass women's protests, US SWP'er Cindy Jaquith described the *chador*, symbol of medieval oppression, as a "symbol of resistance" to the

shah and Sheppard attempted to paint support for an "Islamic republic" as simply misguided popular enthusiasm for a "workers and farmers republic". [British] IMG'er Brian Grogan even boasted proudly that he carried a "Khomeini card" and chanted "Allah Akbar" ("God is Great") at a Teheran demonstration -- as an expression, he explained, of hatred for the shah's army.

As the ayatollahs' program of social reaction is increasingly implemented, the SWP -- without dropping its characteristic pollyannish "things are getting better all the time" idiocy -- has been compelled to raise some belated, tepid criticisms of the existing regime. Five months after your announcement that the "mass movement is basically a progressive struggle" which the "religious leaders have attempted [!]" to dominate, you admit that the Shi'ite clergy "played a leading role in organizing the fight against the shah nationally" (*Intercontinental Press*, 2 April; emphasis added).

If you still refuse to recognise that the "Islamic republic" represents a socially reactionary throwback to a medieval theocracy, you at least no longer dare confuse it with a workers and peasants government, characterising it now as a "new mask for capitalist rule". In a nationally televised debate, HKS spokesman, Babak Zahraie, contrasted the "passivity" (!) of this regime of bloody reaction with the "boldness" of the Cuban deformed workers state. And despite their fig-leaf of opposition to the fraudulent referendum which granted the Iranian masses a "choice" between the shah and an Islamic republic, your comrades in Iran didn't even have the guts to call for a boycott, instead obsequiously proclaiming that the "HKS does not stand in the way of the workers and toilers participating in the referendum" (*Intercontinental Press*, 7 May).

With positions such as these to defend, it is quite easy to see why you chose a nationwide series of SWP forums on Iran in March as the occasion to make official your systematic political exclusion of SL supporters from your "public" events. But your bureaucratism did not go unnoticed. Our statement protesting against your exclusionism has been endorsed by over 120 leftists, trade unionists, academics and others who recognise the necessity for untrammelled political debate within the workers movement. In contrast to your resort to political exclusionism which you sought to justify by raising spurious charges of SL "disruption", forums featuring Fatima Khalil, a Near Eastern woman communist of Muslim origin, sponsored by our comrades of the Spartacist League/US, present a model of proletarian democracy. Attempts at genuine, organised physical disruption by Khomeini-lovers were warded off by a defence guard of militant trade unionists, while all those who observed democratic discussion procedure were given the full right to present their views.

Your bureaucratic cowardice will not stop us in continuing to expose your capitulation to the reactionary mullahs. As the "Islamic republic" moves to consolidate its power, the Iranian left which helped install it -- including your own comrades in the HKS -- may well become the target of an anti-communist bloodbath. For every Fedayeen militant already imprisoned, for every Kurdish independence fighter slaughtered, for every unveiled woman stoned in the streets of Teheran today, for every HKS supporter attacked by Islamic thugs, you must bear your share of the political responsibility.

These are the positions we challenge you to defend before the Australian left and working-class public. We propose a mutually acceptable date within the next four weeks at the Sydney Trades Hall. Naturally, these details of date and venue are negotiable. We await your prompt reply.

Comradely,

N Carlson

for the Spartacist League

Spartacist League

MELBOURNE (03) 62-5135
GPO Box 2339, Melbourne, VIC, 3001

SYDNEY (02) 235-8195
GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001

On Stalinist nationalism

The following letter to *Workers Vanguard* no 228 (30 March) is of relevance also to the article, "China invades Vietnam" in *Australasian Spartacist* no 61 (March 1979).

16 March 1979

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

This is to call your attention to a contradictory formulation in the article "China Get Out!" (*Workers Vanguard* [WV] no 226, 2 March):

"And it is equally unclear whether the Vietnamese Stalinists have the capacity to create an essentially federated state in which the peoples and sub-peoples of Indochina can freely choose their national destiny."

As WV correctly says in the next paragraph:

"We do not place political confidence in the Vietnamese Stalinists to overcome the national question -- on the contrary, we call for the working class to carry out a political revolution to oust the heirs of Ho Chi Minh and replace them with soviets. That is the only road to a genuine democratic socialist federation of Indochina."

WV was correct to suggest that a Hanoi-dominated Indochinese federation would not necessarily be so oppressive of the Cambodians that the majority of them would want an independent state. Despite the well-publicized discontent among non-Russians in the USSR, there is also evidence that many national minorities (Armenians, for example) favor being part of the present federated state, which brings to them very considerable economic advantages. However, like their Kremlin counterparts, the Hanoi Stalinists, nationalist bureaucrats that they are, will certainly not grant the Cambodian people the democratic right of national self-determination.

Comradely,
John Sharpe

Sydney Spartacist League public office

2nd floor
112 Goulburn St,
Sydney

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

Revolutionary literature

Deer Hunter...

Continued from page three

broke from social patriotism. Only a small minority became the conscious partisans of the other side in Vietnam; and many of these, confusing Trotskyism with SWP treachery, extended their sentiment for the NLF to political support to its Stalinist misleaders. The rest remained firmly in the grip of the Democratic Party "doves" like Senator Vance Hartke who flocked to the SWP-dominated National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC). As one NPAC spokesman unwittingly boasted in 1972: "we built [Democratic Party presidential candidate George] McGovern; McGovern didn't build the antiwar movement".

Even in Australia, with its relatively more left-wing antiwar movement and a social-democratic labour movement, the SWP (formerly known as the Socialist Workers League, preceded by the Socialist Youth Alliance) stubbornly fought against anti-imperialist slogans in the antiwar movement, which it dismissed as "some extra rhetoric" (*Direct Action*, January 1971). Australian trade unionists spontaneously blacked cargo for Vietnam, entire unions were called out in solidarity stopworks by their Communist Party (CPA) and Stalinist leaderships. But *Direct Action* (August 1971) warned against the "tragic mistake" of the Moratorium "throwing a major part of our resources into factory agitation" and criticised an "over-emphasis on the slogan Stop Work to Stop The War". The SWP opposed the struggle for genuine working-class solidarity then only to applaud its perversion now.

In the SWP's revisionist retrospective of the antiwar movement, the struggle waged by the Spartacist tendency in the labour movement and among antiwar activists for *class solidarity* with the Indochinese revolution -- our agitation for labour political strikes against the war, our call for "Victory to the Vietnamese revolution" -- simply never happened. And a section of the US bourgeoisie which opposed the war from the standpoint of the interests of US imperialism simply never existed.

Now that the former "doves" who were the SWP's "antiwar" allies join with the "hawks" in clamouring for a mighty imperialist arsenal to police "human rights" around the world, the graduates of the movement which the SWP "best built" remain accessible to the ideological offensive which seeks to prepare popular sentiment for a new Vietnam. But for all his lies, Cimino cannot undo the heroic victory of the Vietnamese working masses against imperialism. And for all its self-congratulatory falsification of history, the SWP cannot hide its refusal to take a class stand with that revolution.

The US SWP's abstentionist position on the civil war raging in Indochina in the 1960s was the first leg on its journey to the Stalinophobic Third Campism which it today embraces in all but name. There are few steps remaining before the SWP, like the German SPD in August 1914, goes over openly to the side of its imperialism -- in defence of "our resources" and "our boys" -- in the recent war in Vietnam it shamelessly refused to stand with the Soviet Union against the Washington/Peking cabal. Reformism is spineless. The lesson of the Vietnamese war which the SWP will never learn is that the answer to the imperialist militarism glorified by *The Deer Hunter* is not the pacifism of social patriots and Stalinists, but the struggle of the international proletariat for power.

Healyite...

Continued from page two

the Communist Party of Iraq?
"I thought that it was a principle among Trotskyists that they should defend workers against all attacks from the state in a capitalist country. How is the British working class to have any confidence in your organisation when you show such indifference to the murder of workers abroad at the hands of their state."

In an enumeration of the supposed crimes of Stalinism against Arab nationalism, including having "led President Nasser around by the nose", the *News Line* reply offers as "theoretical" justification the claim that: "From an historical point of view, the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party of Iraq has played a hundredfold more progressive role in the Middle East than Stalinism."

Such "anti-Stalinism" places the Healyites in the company of Hitler, Chiang Kai-shek and Suharto who likewise condemned the Stalinists as enemies of the "national revolution". Trotskyists, however, consider Stalinist foreign policy counterrevolutionary precisely in its support to bourgeois-nationalist regimes for the sake of Soviet diplomatic manoeuvres. Like the Stalinists whose political line is an apology for the foreign policies of the Sino-Soviet bureauc-

racies, the IC takes its cues from the Libyan government -- with one significant difference: the regimes the Stalinists defend through suicidal "peaceful coexistence" are deformed workers states; the Healyite homeland is a theocratic, militarist, capitalist dictatorship.

The WL/IC cop-baiting succeeds only in demonstrating how well the shoe fits them. Organisationally, their "method" of gangsterism and slander has long since been an open invitation to provocateurs. Politically, they sold their soul to the bourgeois "Arab Revolution" so many years ago that when it came time to auction off the stinking body, only the wretched Qaddafi was bidding. Now they have reached the logical conclusion of this position -- opposition to even the most partial expression of proletarian class independence from the Arab bourgeoisie. It seems likely that the present *Bulletin* attack was "made in the USA" (or in London) rather than in the Libyan embassy, but it's getting harder and harder to tell.

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 231, 11 May 1979)

Hawke...

Continued from page eight

In fact, the ALP/ACTU tops responded to the mini-budget by turning over and playing dead. Not one rally, not one stopwork was called. ACTU advocate Rob Jolly did manage to mention it before the Arbitration Commission full bench as further motivation for the "full" four percent indexation rise. And Hayden issued his perfunctory challenge to Fraser to "resign", obscenely citing Fraser's statement on the sacking of the Whitlam government ("There should be no place for verbal trickery in this Parliament.") against him.

Not that the opportunity was lacking. Railway workers have gone out several times to back up a \$20 wage claim, postal workers are demanding a \$60 per week wage rise, public service workers are being confronted with a Government Employees (Retirement and Redeployment) Bill which would empower the government to sack them without appeal and staged a (pitifully ill-prepared) one-day strike in protest on 30 May. 10,000 public service jobs have already been lost through Fraser's austerity program.

Nor is the answer lacking. Instead of relying on Arbitration and futile pressure tactics like one-day strikes, those unions which are currently engaged in award campaigns must call out their membership on full-fledged strikes. Instead of mourning the ghost of Medibank, we demand free, quality health care for all, including free abortion on demand. Instead of pleading for a *fully inadequate* indexation ruling workers must demand a full, monthly cost-of-living escalator with a hefty wage catch-up. Instead of settling for ever-longer dole queues it is necessary to fight for a shorter work week at no loss in pay -- share the jobs around.

The Whitlam albatross

Hayden's main pitch in response to the mini-budget was not that Fraser was fleecing \$10 a week from the workers' wallets, but that he was

"amateurish" in administering the bosses' economy. Preening itself to regain the Treasury benches in 1980, Labor's message is: we can do it better. As evidence, the ALP and ACTU tops have been mooting about a "Social Contract" -- consciously modelled on the treacherous British pact -- which would involve a deliberate policy of *suppressing* real wages in favour of dubious tax breaks. Both Hawke and right-wing NSW Labor Council secretary, John Ducker, are firm advocates of the "wage-tax trade-off". Even after Fraser's announcement that the surcharge would be maintained, Ducker magnanimously offered the ACTU's cooperation in implementing "an economic strategy designed to halt the rot", including an explicit offer to "reject wage increases of between \$3 and \$4 per week" (*Australian*, 30 May). The ALP/ACTU tops make no secret of why they are willing to slit the economic throats of their members. As the *National Times* (2 June) put it:


"[Senior party members] are arguing that if the ALP can't hold the trade unions in line, it won't last in Government. Opposition Leader Bill Hayden has said Labor will not win government by default."

And Hayden's backhanded slap at Whitlam's "verbal trickery" was another signal to the bourgeoisie that Labor is cutting itself loose from the albatross of the "Whitlam era". No more "Arab loans scandals", no more embarrassing incompetence, no more strained relations with Australia's imperialist big brother -- Ken Wreidt, shadow minister for foreign affairs, recently announced that the ALP is dropping its paper policy (which was never implemented under Whitlam in any case) of opposition to "foreign-owned, controlled or operated bases in Australian territory". And with Socialist Left "anti-Zionist" Bill Hartley forgotten if not completely gone, Labor has been working assiduously to mend its fences with Jewish voters (and financial backers), who went Liberal in droves during the Whitlam administration. Labor's "new image" is one of respectable sobriety: Wran the natty "middle-of-the-road" strikebreaker, Hayden the dour ex-cop ... and Bob Hawke, the responsible labour "statesman".

Hawke or Hayden -- no choice for workers

What's in it for the workers? Nothing! From Curtin's administration of the Australian military effort in World War II to Hawke's mini-crusade for "human rights" anti-Sovietism, from Whitlam's "wages-prices referendum" to Hayden's "Social Contract", the ALP has always been and remains the willing servant of Australian capitalism. The aspirations and historic interests of Labor's working-class base are sharply counterposed to the ALP's national-chauvinist, class-collaborationist, anti-communist program and leadership. To resolve that contradiction, the ALP's ranks must be split away to a revolutionary leadership based on a full program of class struggle and proletarian internationalism -- a Trotskyist program.

The workers have nothing to win in the stakes between "Human Rights" Hawke and "Austerity Budget" Hayden. To the scramble for seats in the bosses' Parliament, we offer the alternative of the struggle for soviet power. And that can only be led by a party modelled on the Bolshevik Party which led the Russian workers to power. ■



sub drive SUCCESS

We are pleased to announce that, despite rained-out May Day marches in Sydney and Wollongong, our annual subscription drive was still a smashing success. We take this opportunity to welcome our new readers to the only revolutionary Marxist monthly in Australia, and to congratulate Comrade Kyle M of Sydney who, with 36½ subscriptions sold, was the highest point scorer in the drive.

Workers Vanguard Sales			Australasian Spartacist subscriptions		
	Quota	Sold		Quota	Sold
Sydney	100	110	Sydney	150	192
Melbourne	60	81	Melbourne	50	71.5
Total	160	191	At large	-	8
			Total	200	271.5

Australasian Spartacist 11 issues (1 year) - \$3

surface mail - \$3 for 11 issues

airmail - \$5 for 11 issues (except Europe/North America)

(overseas rates) - \$10 for 11 issues (Europe/North America)

Donation \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

POSTCODE _____ PHONE _____

Mail to/make cheques payable to: Spartacist Publications, GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001.



Fraser mini-budget hits workers as Hawke hits "human rights" campaign trail

In the words of the 28 May *Australian's* laudatory editorial, Bob Hawke had "cracked a political trifecta". What better way to describe the Moscow "coup" in which Hawke secured a Soviet "promise" to relax emigration restrictions on Russian Jews and release twelve "Prisoners of Zion", including Anatoly Shcharansky, convicted of passing military secrets to the US? Not only had the ACTU head demonstrated that he is equally at home representing the interests of the Australian ruling class in international relations as he is in industrial relations; he upstaged both the tactless Liberal government leader and the colourless Labor opposition leader; and he assured himself a ready-made vote on the ever-popular anti-Soviet catchery: "Save Soviet Jewry".

The head of the Zionist Executive Council of Australian Jewry hailed it as "another example of the humanitarian work with which [Hawke's] name has become associated". The US State Department wanted to talk to him, and the major bourgeois dailies gave him more coverage than Australia has gotten in the American press in donkey's years. The Fraser government shrugged its shoulders and expressed pained ignorance in what "capacity" the trade-union leader was functioning. And Bill Hayden, the Labor parliamentary leader, didn't seem to have anything to say.

Robert JL Hawke, PM?

Hawke's "customary flair" for being "in the right place at the right time", as the *Australian* put it, was no act of serendipity. Hawke has long had close -- and to Whitlam's ALP, embarrassing -- ties with the Zionist lobby in Australia. Before leaving for an International Labor Organisation conference in Geneva, he met with the Soviet ambassador here. On his way to Moscow he stopped off in Jerusalem for a chat with personal friend, Deir Yassin mass murderer Menachem Begin. As we go to press, the agreement he "secured" from Soviet State Trade Union Council head, Alexei Shibaev, has been disclaimed by a second Soviet official, but that is hardly conclusive. With the question of Jewish migration a perennial sore spot among American Congressional "hawks" and the US Senate vocally recalcitrant about endorsing the recently negotiated SALT II agreement, the Soviet Union needs just such a demonstration of capitulatory "flexibility" to keep the cogs of detente turning.

Whatever the outcome, the trifecta has already paid off handsomely for Hawke. It has been an

open secret for years that the feisty Labour faker has his eye on Canberra -- and no secret at all in recent weeks. The safe Victorian Labor seat of Wills will soon be vacant. And the once loutish, beer-guzzling, "bloody-minded" Rhodes Scholar has been conspicuously quiet and well-behaved of late.

What better issue on which to make a diplomatic debut than that of "human rights" for



Bob "human rights" Hawke, as loyal a servant of capitalism as Malcolm Fraser.

Soviet Jews. There could be no more explicit statement that Hawke would be a reliable guardian of the mini-imperialist interests of America's junior partner in the Pacific. For three years "human rights" has been the watchword of imperialist chieftain Jimmy Carter's crusade for moral and military refurbishment of US imperialism in preparation for a confrontation with the main bastion of anti-capitalism in the world, the Soviet degenerated workers state.

Any deal by the Soviet bureaucracy on Jewish emigration thus represents a *capitulation* to imperialist pressure, all the more dangerous because it is in pursuit of a fraudulent "disarmament" scheme. In exchange for the mothballing of a handful of outdated US bombers, the Kremlin misleaders have made dangerous military concessions to US imperialism in the SALT II agreement. The Kremlin's willingness to subordinate

the military security of the Soviet degenerated workers state to the pursuit of an illusory "detente" with the imperialists represents a greater crime against the international proletariat than even its practice of anti-Semitic persecution.

Thus we defend the right of Soviet Jews -- as of all Soviet citizens -- to emigrate, but we do not extend that right to those who bear military secrets or those like Shcharansky who, as we noted at the time of his trial last year, is "guilty as hell" of passing Soviet military information to the CIA. Nor does it extend to any mass out-migration which could significantly weaken the Soviet military and economic infrastructure. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which is "Trotskyist" only in name, not only defended Shcharansky last year but two years ago even called on the Soviet Union to *initiate* steps toward nuclear disarmament. If the SWP today denounces SALT II as a "cover for US arms build-up" (*Direct Action*, 31 May), it is not from the Trotskyist standpoint

of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union -- they refuse to call for the maintenance of an adequate *Soviet* nuclear arsenal -- but out of pacifist concern that it has "nothing to do with reducing the nuclear arsenal".

Fraser lies, Labor plays dead

While Hawke was jetsetting for "human rights", Fraser unleashed yet another attack on the living standards of the working class Hawke purports to lead. Fraser's mousey treasurer, John Howard, foreshadowed the August budget with a series of draconian measures designed to bolster up the profit margins of the Australian bourgeoisie far enough in advance of the 1980 elections to have been forgotten by an angry electorate.

The 40 percent government subsidy on medical expenses -- the only reminder that Medibank ever existed -- is gone now too, leaving only a meaningless government commitment to cover all scheduled medical fees over \$20 per item. Hospital rates are being hiked by 25 percent. Education spending would be "more rigorously pruned than on any previous occasion" announced Howard, including an even more miserly means test for TEAS payments than already is the case.

"Lies, Lies, Lies" screamed the front page of the *Illawarra Mercury* (25 May) with exceptional accuracy. But what really got the goats of the bourgeois editorialists and their wealthy patrons was not the attacks on education and medical care but Fraser's blatant repudiation of last year's promise that the "1.5 percent" "temporary" tax surcharge -- which actually operated at 2.57 percent -- would be lifted in June and full tax indexation restored. The ALP parliamentarians and the fake lefts who grip firmly to their coattails joined in the clamour over Fraser's "credibility gap", but had offered little of substance in reply. The Tweedle Dee reformists of the Communist Party and the Tweedle Dum reformists of the SWP called for vague, virtually identical "united campaigns" of the same ALP and trade-union bureaucrats who had in unison *done nothing* when Medibank was dismantled in the first place, when the union-bashing IRB was created, when Fraser brought down his "horror budget" last year.

Continued on page seven



Spartacist League forums

IRAN: No to the veil!

**For workers revolution to
defeat Islamic reaction**

<p>Sydney Uni of New South Wales 1 pm, Wednesday 13 June, CLB 1.</p> <p>Sydney Uni 1 pm, Thursday 21 June, Location to be announced.</p>	<p>7.30 pm, Friday 22 June, Room 64, Sydney Trades Hall.</p> <p>Wollongong 8 pm, Wednesday 27 June, Main Hall, Trade Union Centre, Station Street.</p>	<p>Melbourne LaTrobe Uni 1 pm, Thursday 14 June, ELT 5.</p> <p>6 pm, Sunday 17 June, Plumbers Hall, 52 Victoria Street, Carlton.</p>
---	---	---

Speaker: Marie Hotschilt (SL Central Committee)