



Soviet Union: honour your treaty!

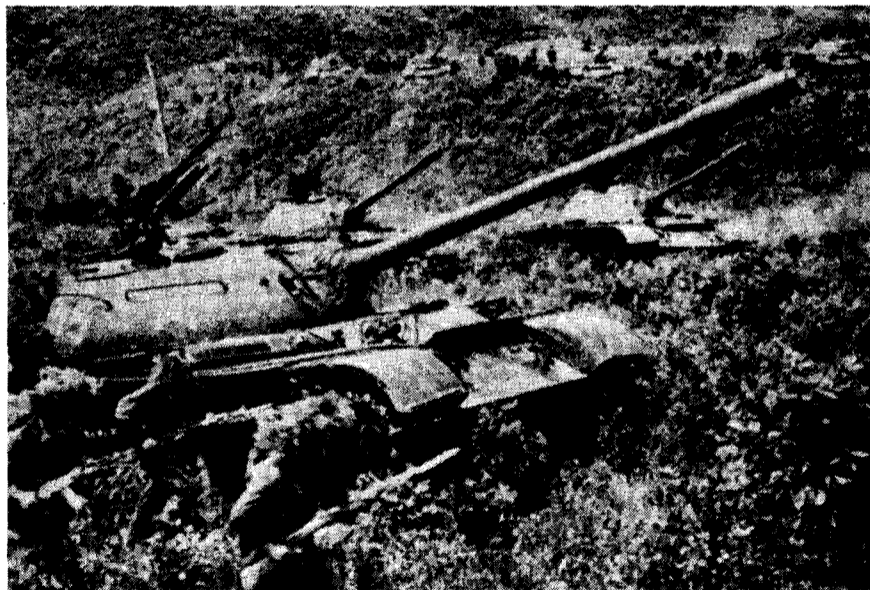
China invades Vietnam

US/China anti-Soviet alliance means bloody aggression against Vietnam

For political revolution in Hanoi, Peking, Moscow!

The massive Chinese invasion of Vietnam on the morning of 17 February culminated weeks of nervous speculation, and triggered a foreboding of holocaust more palpable than any since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. But this time the confrontation between US imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state was indirect, played out not on the "hot line" between the White House and the Kremlin but in the heat of a bloody shooting war between their respective junior partners. The *Australian's* banner headline announcing the invasion captured clearly enough the stakes involved: "World awaits war reaction by Russia -- Stay out, Carter warns Moscow".

"Vietnam must be punished" was the ominous theme with which the Chinese deputy prime minister, Teng Hsiao-ping, punctuated his tour of the imperialist heartland in late January in celebration of US diplomatic recognition of the once despised "Chicom's". Three weeks later tens of thousands of Chinese troops -- backed by fighter planes, tanks and artillery -- poured into the five northern provinces of Vietnam. "We do not want a single inch of Vietnamese territory", said



Chinese tanks on manoeuvres (1977): "Vietnam must be punished".

Peking's Hsinhua News Agency. "After counter-attacking the Vietnamese aggressors as they deserve, the Chinese frontier troops will strictly keep to defending the border of their own country." Two weeks later, Peking announced the (long-established) border would have to be "re-adjusted" following the invasion. No one, not even the Maoists, took at face value Peking's claim that it had launched a full-scale invasion of Vietnam merely to avenge alleged minor border incursions. Three months earlier Vietnam had signed a "mutual assistance" pact with Moscow -- cementing the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance. Then in early January Hanoi dared to topple Peking's client, the hated Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, after a year of fratricidal border war.

As the fighting entered its third week, it was not altogether clear who would end up doing the "punishing". Peking had some 200,000 troops deployed in the mountainous border region; regular bombing sorties struck as deep as Haiphong. In the first days of March Peking captured the provincial capital of Lang Son, forcing a retreat by Vietnamese regular forces in the first major set-piece battle of the war.

Until then the Vietnamese had been fighting primarily with local militia -- and claiming a

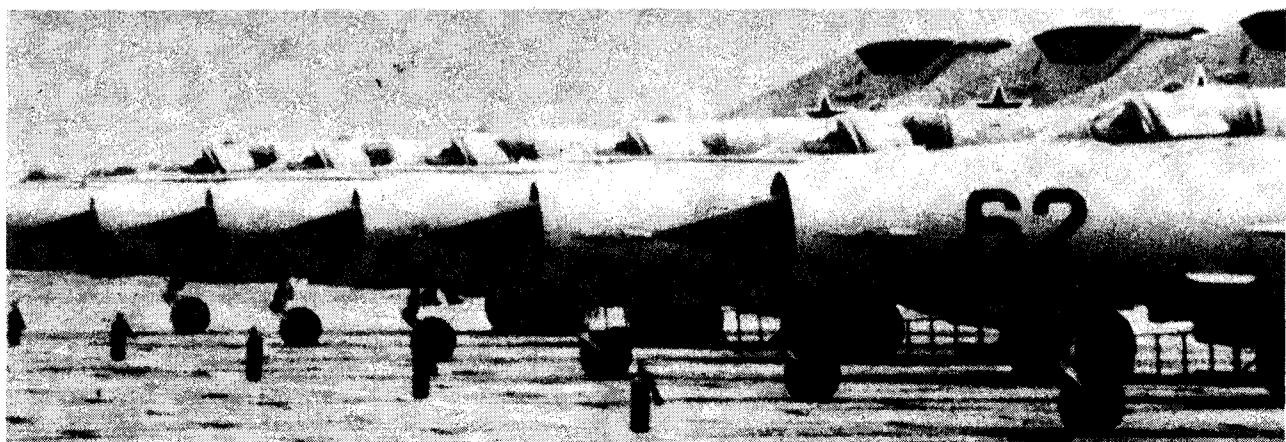
kill rate of nearly 2000 Chinese soldiers a day. The Vietnamese claims, though undoubtedly exaggerated, nonetheless reflect the comparative military capacities of the two Stalinist regimes. The overwhelmingly larger Chinese army has had virtually no battle experience since the Korean war nearly thirty years ago, with the exception of the brief border war with India in 1962 and minor skirmishes along the Soviet and Vietnamese borders. The Vietnamese army and militia are battle-tested, with the experience of three decades of combat against the French and US imperialists and their puppets. The Soviet-equipped MiG-21s which the Vietnamese have, though qualitatively fewer in number, are far more sophisticated than China's dated MiG-19s. If China does succeed in giving Vietnam the "bloody nose" it threatened to, it will not be without a price.

China battles Vietnam for regional control

The recent clashes in Indochina reflect three qualitatively different levels of conflict. In the case of the border disputes between Cambodia and Vietnam over the last few years, the predominant factors were local national/Stalinist rivalries fueled by ethnic animosity. On the other hand, behind the Vietnam-China conflict lurks US imperialism's ultimate appetite for reconquest of the USSR, the main military/industrial powerhouse of the deformed workers states and the primary military obstacle to the imperialists' revanchist appetites to regain that half of the world lost to capitalist exploitation.

Up to now, however, the main content of the confrontation between Peking and Hanoi has been the question of who will dominate Indochina. After the removal of American imperialist influence in the peninsula, the Chinese evidently feel that because of their great weight in the East they are entitled to inherit the region. But with their own history as the most active force in the area, the Vietnamese chose instead to make a deal with the Russians and then began to consolidate their influence.

Marxists do not support the nationalist aims of the rival Stalinist bureaucracies in Hanoi and Peking feuding over which of them shall be the overlord of the Indochinese peninsula. However, the Chinese invasion of another workers state -- condemnable as it is in its own right -- is particularly criminal in that it was carried out in collusion with the imperialist power which was only four years earlier ousted from Indochina.



Soviet MiGs near Moscow: Kremlin's reliance on detente encourages US imperialists' drive to war.



Vietnam soldier wounded in border fighting.

It comes in the context of Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade and an increasingly provocative stance by US imperialism vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, expressed most sharply in Washington's belligerent threats against Soviet "involvement" in Iran and its reckless charges of Soviet responsibility for the murder of the US ambassador in Afghanistan. Carter did not forget Teng's statement that "We will have to give the Vietnamese a bloody lesson" (the word bloody was deliberately omitted in US press accounts of Teng's remark).

China get out of Vietnam

The Chinese invasion is clearly intertwined with imperialist opposition to the gains of the Vietnamese revolution, won at the cost of more than a million lives and decades of struggle. Socialists and labour militants must demand that *China get out of Vietnam now!* We call on the workers and peasants of the Chinese deformed workers state to demand an end to the obscene, sinister anti-Soviet Peking/Washington alliance now aimed at bloodying the working people of Vietnam. The workers movement must stop the shipment of any military supplies to China. And we address ourselves to Moscow and the Soviet workers to demand, *USSR: honour your treaty with Vietnam!*

But it is also necessary to warn that the continuation of China's reactionary invasion can quickly take the conflict out of a regional context. Should the Soviet Union be drawn into the fighting in a direct way, it would pit the

Continued on page two

China invades...

Continued from page one

Russian degenerated workers state against the Western imperialists, principally the US, through the intermediary of their Chinese allies. This would pose point blank the urgent task of militarily defending the USSR and the gains of the October Revolution. In this conflict the Trotskyists know where they stand: shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet workers against the counterrevolutionary attack. The Fourth International was founded on the principle of its unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and we will not flinch in the decisive hour.

US "neutrality": wishing China luck

In contrast to its frenzied response to Cuba's military intervention in Angola or the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the US reacted to the Chinese invasion quite calmly. A spokesman for the State Department declared, "We call for the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and Chinese troops from Vietnam" (*New York Times*, 18 February). In fact this cynical and hypocritical "neutrality" dovetails quite neatly with the Chinese diplomatic line. Thus Teng denounces the Vietnamese as "the Cubans of Asia" and Carter talks of Vietnam and Cuba as Soviet "surrogates". A State Department denial was practically an admission of complicity: "We did not either give a green light or have a battle plan submitted to us" (*New York Times*, 21 February).

When Carter remarked on 20 February that the war would not affect the new Chinese-American "friendship", the *Economist* (24 February) noted that it was "about as close as a nominally neutral observer can get to wishing China luck". And in the midst of the war Michael Blumenthal, Carter's secretary of the treasury, went ahead with his scheduled trip to Peking. Blumenthal sagely reminded his hosts that "even limited invasions ... turn public opinion against the transgressor" (*International Herald Tribune*, 26 February). Simultaneously with Blumenthal's visit, the Chinese were also entertaining Eric Varley, British minister for industry, who was there to arrange a sale of Harrier jets to Peking.

Underlining the extent of the imperialist line-up was the note Carter sent to Malcolm Fraser, thanking him for his "diplomatic initiatives" -- in particular, the decision to cut off Australian aid to Vietnam! Australian jackal imperialism was so blatant in its virulent anti-Soviet, "pro-China tilt" (as the *National Times* described it) that it caused an American spokesman to describe it as "alarmist" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March). Meanwhile seamen in Port Hedland reacted to the invasion by placing 24-hour bans on two Chinese ships. Wharfies and seamen in other ports must follow this example with protest bans on shipping bound for China -- as expressions of outrage against the Chinese invasion and against the openly anti-Soviet designs of US imperialism and its Australian running dog.

Even the liberal *New York Times* admitted that "Soviet charges that President Carter encouraged the Chinese strike, at least tacitly, during Teng Hsiao-ping's recent visit cannot be dismissed" (reprinted in *International Herald Tribune*, 24-25 February). The *Times* editorial, reflecting nervousness among US liberals, squeamishly decried prior "loose talk out of the White House about how China and the United States share 'strategic' objectives around the world".

No phoney detente! No backing down!

The liberals are worried about the fate of detente, and particularly the SALT II agreement,

which for the price of a few mothballed US B-52s would require the Soviet Union to reduce its overall strategic force of missiles and bombers by 10 percent. But Moscow's reaction thus far to what it termed "brazen aggression" has actually given them little real cause to worry.

In a major policy speech two weeks after the invasion, Brezhnev added nothing new to repeated

neutrality while the Chinese were engaged in combat with Soviet-equipped Indian troops.

Today the fruits of the nationalist rivalry and mutual backstabbing between the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies, each seeking to maintain their own caste privileges, have fully ripened. Decades of Soviet betrayals of the world proletariat in pursuit of "detente" have led only to



Spartacist League (SL) placards at a 23 February Sydney protest against China's invasion of Vietnam. On 19 February the SL/US held a protest outside the Chinese consulate in New York, which prompted Soviet news coverage and a message of gratitude from the Vietnamese UN consul. Five days later a contingent of 100 of our comrades carried our slogans in a 1000-strong, Stalinist-dominated demonstration; conspicuously absent was any contingent from the US Socialist Workers Party, loath to be found alongside the pro-Moscow Stalinists in the midst of a US-USSR confrontation.

Soviet warnings that it would "honour its obligations" under the treaty except to urge "the consolidation of detente". Meanwhile concrete assistance to Vietnam has been limited to airlifts of military equipment, augmented by the reinforcement of massive Soviet forces on the Manchurian border and a small Soviet naval task force off Vietnamese waters. Numerous rumours in the bourgeois press -- ranging from imminent Soviet seizure of the Chinese-controlled Paracel Islands to a mass influx of Russian and Cuban "volunteers" to a pre-emptive strike which would wipe out the Chinese nuclear missile silos in Sinkiang and the Taching oilfields in northern Manchuria (both militarily quite feasible targets for the Soviet Union) -- have all proven false. The conservative Soviet response is conditioned not only by its obsessive quest for detente with US imperialism but also by its desire to arm-twist the Vietnamese into granting Cam Ranh Bay for a Soviet military installation.

The Kremlin bureaucracy's passionate but futile pursuit of "peaceful co-existence" has made it a sitting duck for imperialist brinkmanship and facilitated the current imperialist offensive. The *Economist* (24 February) was quite clear about what a Soviet back-down would mean: "If the Americans manage to deter the Russians from taking any effective military counteraction against China, they will have demonstrated that they can still make their weight felt". Had Khrushchev not backed down in the face of Kennedy's embargo during the Cuban missile crisis, had Brezhnev extended a Soviet nuclear shield over Hanoi and Haiphong when the B-52s threatened to reduce these cities to rubble, the imperialists might today think longer and harder about putting their anti-Soviet alliance to the test and posing the threat of nuclear holocaust.

Yet the Kremlin and its domestic mouthpiece, the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), cling to the pacifist delusion of detente. Rather than call for Soviet determination in the face of imperialist blackmail, the SPA's *Socialist* (28 February) seeks to persuade the imperialist butchers, foremost among them Jimmy "Human Rights" Carter, that the "hawkish line" which prevails "at this stage" (!) is "shortsighted". Instead the SPA offers the "international capitalist politicians" a better deal: a bloc with Moscow against the "warmongers" in Peking!

China: don't be a cat's paw of US imperialism

The previous issue of the *Socialist* (14 February) points to China's criminal support of Chile's Pinochet and imperialist megalomaniac Richard Nixon. An open letter to the Chinese Communist Party by the SPA's sister group, the CPUSA, runs through a few more of Peking's betrayals of internationalism, like its support to Pakistan against the Bangladesh national independence movement and its collusion with the CIA-inspired South African invasion of Angola. It fails however to mention the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina, where Chou En-lai sold out the Khmer Rouge and Pathet Lao, who were in attendance.

But the Chinese delegates weren't the only ones to betray the Indochinese revolution at the Geneva conference. It was Molotov who cooked up the deal with Anthony Eden whereby the Stalinist Vietnam, who militarily controlled 85 percent of the country, were forced to cede the entire southern half of Vietnam back to the imperialists. And when Peking defended itself against border transgressions by the Indian bourgeoisie in 1962, the Soviet Union maintained a stance of

the current anti-Soviet offensive. By collaborating in that offensive Brezhnev's counterparts in Peking are mortally threatening the Chinese workers state. The defence of the workers states requires that their bureaucratic misrulers be thrown out by the proletariat. For political revolution in Peking, Moscow and Hanoi!

When Peking was under the imperialist gun in the sixties, its pose as the militant, anti-imperialist alternative to Soviet "detente" took in many radicals. Today China is virtually totally isolated -- Albania is gone, Vietnam hostile, North Korea shaky -- its closest ally is the US. Thus the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), one of Peking's dwindling bands of discredited sycophants, finds itself aligned in the current dispute with "the decisive sections of the Liberal Party" (*Vanguard*, 22 February). But with a Trotskyist understanding of the forces driving the Peking bureaucracy, it was possible *ten years ago* for the Spartacist tendency to

"... warn against the growing objective possibility -- given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union -- of a U.S. deal with China. Should the imperialists adjust their policies in terms of their long-run interests (which would take time, as such factors as U.S. public opinion would have to be readjusted), the Chinese would be as willing as the Russians are at present to build 'Socialism in One Country' through deals with imperialism at the expense of internationalism." (*Marxist Bulletin* no 9, "Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League [US]", 1 September 1969)

Fake Trotskyists: third campism and crypto-Stalinism

Significantly, the International Socialists (IS) has been dredging up its "third camp" politics more and more in the recent past and putting it to the only use this brand of politics has: a theoretical cover for capitulating to Stalinophobic anti-communism. Should Russia enter the war against China, the IS will undoubtedly find itself on the side of "little" China -- and US imperialism -- against Russian "totalitarian imperialism". To distance itself from Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, the IS expressed its sympathy for *all* Vietnamese "refugees from state capitalist repression" (*Battler*, 27 January), many of whom were petty capitalists "repressed" by being expropriated!

Most of the rest of the Australian left, in-

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cluding the fake Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Socialist Labour League (SLL), has adapted to the pro-Vietnam sympathies still pervasive in the Australian labour movement as a residue of past solidarity with the Vietnamese anti-imperialist struggle while embracing the "third camp" aversion to the Soviet Union. Thus they have uniformly come out in support of plucky, little Vietnam -- not only against China, but even against Cambodia -- while avoiding like the plague any connection with the USSR.

To support the Hanoi Stalinists against either Pol Pot or Peking in the absence of imperialist intervention is an expression of *political support* for the Vietnamese Stalinist bureaucracy. In the case of the SWP, which has proven itself quite adept at pursuing a "third camp" line disguised in Trotskyist rhetoric, political support to the Hanoi bureaucracy is preferable to Soviet defencism -- and the SWP has gone through theoretical gyrations to demonstrate that the US-China alliance is in fact directed not against Russia but against Vietnam and that Russia and China are virtually equally culpable in the present war.

Always the most bizarre exponent of any opportunist appetite, the Healyite SLL has given open political support to the Vietnamese Stalinists, labelling Hanoi's defeat of Pol Pot "a victory for the Indo-Chinese revolution" and the Teng clique an "openly capitalist restorationist wing" of the Chinese bureaucracy (*Workers News*, 20 February). The Healyites have a sordid history of uncritically tailing the Vietnamese Stalinists and the Mao/Red Guard wing of the Chinese Stalinists (as in the Cultural Revolution). Now they have not only *explicitly refused* to call for political revolution against the Hanoi bureaucracy, but have justified it by declaring that the military defence of a deformed workers state *precludes* a call for the "political overthrow" of the ruling bureaucracy (*Workers News*, 2 March). This is the classic *Stalinist* rationale for slandering Trotskyism as counterrevolutionary!

Vietnam vs Cambodia -- no support by Marxists

For Marxists, there can be no question of political support to one Stalinist bureaucracy against another in a war between two deformed workers states. In either case the victor would exclude the working class from exercising political power through soviet organs of proletarian democracy. Thus we called for flat opposition to the Vietnam-Cambodia war on both sides and opposed the Vietnamese invasion which overthrew the Pol Pot regime.

On the other hand the Spartacist League did not demand the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops which were propping up its creation, the FUNSK (National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea), and then pursuing the remnants of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Why? In 1977, when fighting broke out between Vietnam and Cambodia we were among the first to denounce this murderous Stalinist nationalism on both sides, at a time when many on the left pretended that the border war was simply a figment of the CIA's imagination. However once it was no longer a question of a border war, it was not immediately obvious that communists should demand immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. We declared our opposition to the presence of a long-term occupation army which would necessarily place the national question for the Khmer people on the agenda and thus raise the question of the Cambodian right to self-determination (see *Workers Vanguard* no 223, 19 January). But the Vietnamese forces presently in the country are wiping out the remnants of the Khmer Rouge regime and consolidating the hold of the new Hanoi client regime under the banner of the FUNSK.

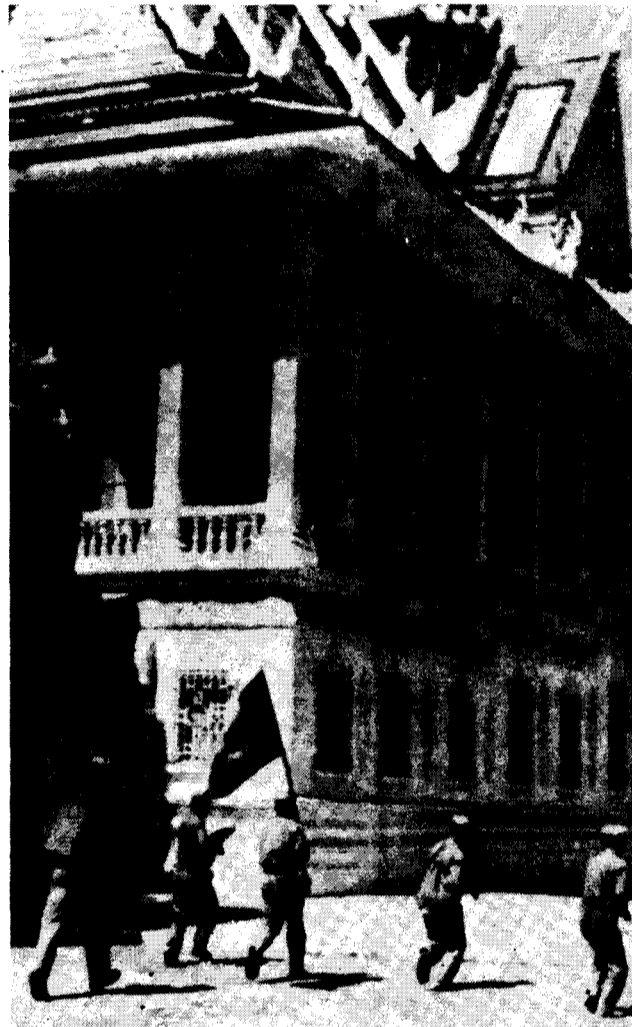
Isn't the FUNSK regime, even with the presence of the Vietnamese troops, better from the point of view of the working masses than its predecessor Pol Pot? Immediately after taking power the Pol Pot regime brutally expelled the urban population into the countryside and shut down what little industry Cambodia had, going so far as to eliminate currency and abolish voluntary (!) marriage. Now the Vietnamese have imposed a regime which promises to do away with this irrational peasant atavism and xenophobia. Given a choice, would the Cambodians rather have national independence or schools, marriage of their own choice, food, children, medicine and wages? It is not immediately clear -- although it was notable that the predicted wave of Cambodian refugees fleeing before the Vietnamese troops never materialised.

And it is equally unclear whether the Vietnamese Stalinists have the capacity to create an essentially federated state in which the

Continued on page seven

SWP ventures into "third camp" Is Cambodia capitalist?

Following the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia by the Vietnamese army in January, *Direct Action* (25 January), the paper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), carried an article by leading member Allen Myers condemning the Vietnamese takeover as "a major setback for the peoples of both countries and for the cause of socialism on a world scale". Myers denounced both regimes as "privileged bureaucracies committed to 'socialism in one country'" and ob-



FUNSK troops entering Phnom Penh, 7 January.

served that "it is impossible to tell whether Hanoi or the Khmer Rouge have the greater responsibility for initiating the border fighting". Two weeks later, *Direct Action* ran another article on the invasion by Fred Feldman, a cadre of the SWP's US mentor, which supported the invasion, placed the blame for the border problems on the Cambodians and referred to Pol Pot's Cambodia variously and vaguely as a "dictatorship", a "tyranny", an "agrarian regime" and a "bizarre authoritarianism based on the labor of a militarized peasantry".

Without any explanation, the SWP adopted Feldman's position. Now, four years after the Khmer Rouge came to power, the SWP has announced for the first time that "what [the Khmer Rouge] had established was not a workers state but a particularly brutal and oppressive capitalist government" (*Direct Action*, 1 March). Brutal and oppressive, yes -- but capitalist? With the crushing of the venal Lon Nol dictatorship in 1975, the victorious Stalinist Khmer Rouge not only suppressed what there was of a capitalist class in Cambodia, but also collectivised everything in sight and even eliminated currency!

Pol Pot led a hateful Stalinist tyranny whose irrational bureaucratism came close to reducing the gains of 1975 to ruins, a regime which raved about the ancient claims of the Khmer empire to southern Vietnam, extolled muscle power as an alternative to "foreign" machinery, and in chauvinist paranoia murderously purged a whole layer of Khmer Rouge cadres trained in Vietnam. The occupying Vietnamese who overthrew him were greeted more as liberators than as hated conquerors. One Cambodian school teacher recounted how in some villages, "The Khmer Rouge tried to force the people to go into the jungle with them. So the people rose up and killed them. They had had enough" (*Asiaweek*, 9 February). But the 1975 overthrow of capitalist/landlord class rule was a gain for the Cambodian masses, a necessary premise for a new Cambodian society to emerge from the morass created by imperialist devastation and augmented

by Stalinist irrationality. In refusing to recognise the proletarian class character of the Cambodian state, the SWP is taking a stand not with the Indochinese revolution but *against* the defence of those gains.

Why the confusion, flipflops and theoretical acrobatics over an event which took place four years ago? The US SWP's analysis of the Indochinese revolution figured integrally in its long-term aspiration to become the party of US social democracy. The antiwar movement of the 1960s provided the SWP with its first real opportunity to cosy up to a section of the US bourgeoisie, which hinged on demonstrating its "third camp" neutrality between imperialism and the deformed/degenerated workers states. In the 1960s, the SWP denied that a social revolution was even taking place in Indochina. The real issue, they said, was a democratic one -- self-determination -- conveniently relieving themselves of any obligation to call for military victory to the Stalinist-led NLF. With this theoretical fig-leaf, the SWP paved the way to a class-collaborationist bloc with a defeatist section of the US bourgeoisie -- and its counterpart in Australia, encompassing the social-democratic tops.

When in 1975 the victory of the NLF in Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia resulted in the creation of bureaucratically deformed workers states, the SWP was faced with a new theoretical dilemma: how to resolve after the fact the blatant contradiction between its resulting position and the social reality of post-1975 Indochina. So, three years after the South Vietnamese bourgeoisie fled with its gold bars, two years after South Vietnam was incorporated with the north to form the "Socialist Republic of Vietnam", the SWP finally decided that the South had become a deformed workers state (region?) by virtue of the expropriation of the petty capitalists in Ho Chi Minh City!

Not so Cambodia. Since the Khmer Rouge had expropriated everything immediately upon seizing power, there was no such propitious moment upon which to hinge a class transformation there -- which was just as well for the SWP. The same impulse to Stalinophobic "third camp" neutrality which led it to deny the civil war in Indochina led it also to put as much distance as possible between itself and Pol Pot's Cambodia. The more the xenophobic, brutal, irrational character of this regime was exposed in the West to the horror of disillusioned left liberals -- the true believers in Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade -- the more reluctant was the social-democratic SWP to defend it as a workers state.

With the Chinese invasion of Vietnam the SWP had only to extend its fabrication a logical step further to provide a means of ducking the issue of defence of the Soviet Union, Vietnam's patron. According to the SWP, capitalist Cambodia spearheaded a "triple alliance" with the US and China "which threatened the very existence of the Vietnamese workers state". China's invasion was designed to prevent Hanoi's new client regime from "establish[ing] a workers state in Kampuchea" (*Direct Action*, 22 February). Thus the SWP wished away the whole *anti-Soviet* character of the US/China alliance, barely mentioning even the possibility of Soviet inter-

Continued on page seven

FORUM

CHINA'S INVASION: Prelude to US imperialist anti-Soviet war

Sydney:

1 pm, 8 March

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Sydney University

Speaker: Len Meyers
(SL Central Committee)

Melbourne:

1 pm, 14 March

Board room
Union building
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Speaker: David Grumot
(SL Central Committee)

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Iran...

Continued from page eight

shah's loyalists could not win. The deluded shah may well believe he still retains some measure of popular support and no doubt feels betrayed by his imperialist sponsors. But what is of paramount strategic importance for Carter and Brzezinski is not the fate of the Pahlavi dynasty but the preservation of a powerful Iranian buffer against the Soviet Union based on the armed forces elite they trained.

According to an account in the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al Anbaa* (quoted in the *Australian*, 15 February), the US was instrumental in convincing the army to dump Bakhtiar even while it still gave him official support:

"Washington's advice was related to the commanders of the Iranian Army through the U.S. Embassy in Tehran....

"The Carter Administration holds the view that the Iranian Islamic Republic will act as a firm barrier in the face of communist penetration in the area and that the Iranian communists will be the first to be sacrificed by the revolution."

Khomeini has saved an otherwise lost cause for the imperialists, managing to supplant the shah's despised regime with a more popular government based on the military, a regime which will be if possible even more anti-communist than its predecessor.

Khomeini may want to protect his relations with US imperialism, but the sentiment to "cut off the hands of foreigners" is practically a tradition in Iran. Four days after Bakhtiar's downfall, some 100 armed guerrillas described as "Communists" (!) by the Khomeini forces, stormed the US Embassy and occupied it for several hours. The ferocious anti-US hostility is not mere xenophobia or typical "Third World" apologia for the Stalinist notion that the national-bourgeois revolution can free the nation from the yoke of imperialism. The shah was not just a US puppet, but a sub-imperialist in his own right. But the US had linked itself to the shah's rule when it engineered the CIA overthrow of the Mossadeq regime in 1953. And it has trained the Iranian military ever since.

Mopping up

The problem now facing Khomeini's mullahs is the consolidation of their rule. On the one hand there are the shah's forces to be purged of hard-line shah loyalists while holding on to as many reliable officers and police torturers as can be protected from the anger of the masses. On the other hand are the mopping-up actions against runaway insurgency.

After having neutralised the overwhelming mass of the army, the new regime moved to secure its hold over the military by a purge of the shah's top commanders. The Imperial Guard's deputy commander was gunned down in his home. Eight other generals, including Nematollah Nassiri, ex-head of SAVAK, and air cavalry commander Manouchehr Khosrowdad have been executed by firing squads at Khomeini's headquarters following trials by an "Islamic court". Another 41 have been "retired".

Meanwhile, a monopoly of armed might must be secured for the regular army. In a televised address Khomeini demanded:

"All weapons must be surrendered to the mosques. The selling of arms is heresy. Don't let those weapons fall into the hands of the enemies of Islam. Islamic soldiers must be armed. But others must not be armed.... The state must be preserved. The disorder must end." (UPI dispatch, 13 February)

Despite the difficulties inherent in trying to order the same troops who only a few days before had passed out their weapons to the population to collect them again by force, Khomeini's government will likely succeed in suppressing "leftist" opposition to the new order. In Teheran, Muslim "shock brigades" have already carried out savage attacks on student leftists. The "Marxist-Leninist" guerrillas are well supplied with military hardware but their support to Khomeini over the last year has so completely politically disarmed them that they will not be able to mount an effective opposition to Khomeini in power. They have chanted "Allahu Akhbar" ("god is great") and "Khuda, Koran, Khomeini" ("god, the Koran, Khomeini") for too long to sing a different tune now and expect the masses to follow. When the Fedayeen, succumbing to Khomeini's threats, called off their street march, they did so out of fear that the march "could halt the smoothness [!] of current affairs" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 February). Even then, they avoided any attack on Khomeini, blaming instead "a fence of reactionary mullahs around Khomeini [a great man and a great leader" according to one Fedayeen spokesman] who in the last few days

have diminished his direct contact with the people of Iran".

Iran's mullahs need the iron fist of a military trained and equipped by imperialism to enforce "justice" according to the Koran. The police stations burned down during the street fighting will be rebuilt. The shah's gendarmerie (which has now sworn allegiance to Khomeini) will reoccupy them and a regenerated and renamed SAVAK will again be unleashed against those dubbed "traitors" by the new regime. To restore the flow of oil abroad and refill the state's coffers, the government must restore labour discipline among the militant oil workers.

The Iranian workers have proved their willingness to lay down their lives to topple an oppressive dictatorship. If they are not to be put under the yoke of an equally reactionary "Islamic republic", the three million strong proletariat must begin now, before the stabilisation of a new dictatorship, to prepare a struggle for power. Only the revolutionary leadership necessary for the independent mobilisation of the working class is missing.

Iran's phoney February

There were incidents in Bakhtiar's fall that looked like the February Revolution in Russia in 1917 -- when the ranks of the Iranian army, after more than a year of bloody confrontation with demonstrating masses, went over to what they thought was the side of "the people". Upon such emotion-packed moments hinge insurrections. But despite the mood, Iran's February has little in common with Russia's February. One incident serves to draw the distinction: when the prisons of Moscow were opened, the Bolshevik Dzerzhinsky, who was at hard labour, rushed out to address the workers soviets still clad in his prison clothes. In Teheran the released prisoners rush to the mosques to thank Allah. There are no mass democratic institutions of incipient dual power and no revolutionaries to fight for a proletarian policy within them.

Iran's February and October 1917 are still to come. Perhaps the leading cadre of that future revolution will learn its crucial lessons from the explosion of the broad masses' illusions in Khomeini in the aftermath of 1978-79. The reactionary character of Khomeini's theocracy -- based on military rule draped with the "democratic" camouflage of referendums and constitutions -- will emerge fully under the pressures of continued instability and tumult. A revolutionary cadre must be forged in political struggle against the mullahs.

It is the crisis of proletarian leadership which has delivered the Iranian workers and peasants into the hands of the mullahs. The powerful Iranian proletariat can be the vanguard of socialist revolution throughout the entire Middle East, sweeping aside all the shahs, sheiks and colonels who enforce imperialism's rule of oppression and exploitation. But this historic task can be fulfilled only under the leadership of an authentic Trotskyist party, built through unrelenting political struggle against absolutism, Islamic reaction and Persian chauvinism.

For workers revolution in Iran!

A genuine Trotskyist vanguard would fight for a sovereign, secular constituent assembly, championing the democratic aspirations of the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie to win them to the side of the proletariat in the struggle for a workers and peasants republic. Only the seizure of power by the working class and the smashing of the capitalist state apparatus can guarantee democratic rights, land to the tiller, equality for women, the rights of the national and religious minorities and the struggle against imperialist domination.

Today in Iran the objective ripeness for social revolution can be seen everywhere: in the brittle arrogance of the former autocracy with its sophisticated Phantom jets which it could not put into the sky, in the mass hatred of monarchist rule and the willingness of virtually a whole people to fight to bring it down. But there will be no social revolution in Iran until the powerful proletariat takes the offensive away from the mullahs and bazaaris -- until it is the proletariat and its vanguard which runs the general strikes, sets up the barricades along class lines, broadcasts as the "voice of the revolution". When it is the workers' armed militias and not the fanatic mullah marshals who take over public buildings; when there is popular justice against both the SAVAK torturers and their clerical replacements; when the army is split along class lines and the masses of soldiers come over to the workers' cause against their ex-monarchist and new Islamic officer corps -- then Iran will have its decisive social revolution. ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 225, 16 February 1979)

As Khomeini cries for Revisionist "revolution"

The rise to power of the ayatollah (holymen) Ruhollah Khomeini and his Islamic Revolutionary Council of Shi'ite mullahs was enthusiastically welcomed by the opportunist left, foremost among them the self-styled "Trotskyist" revisionist currents. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) announced on the front page of *Direct Action* (15 February) that "The revolutionary masses of Iran have won a great victory". "An enormous blow to world imperialism" -- the "Iranian working class" has "shattered the resistance of the army", de-



Teheran University crowd attacks general Latifi before mullahs' victory.

clared *Workers News* (16 February), twice-weekly of the bizarre Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL). And the workerist "Third-Camp" International Socialists (IS) enthused that "the possibilities of [the Iranian] revolution are only just beginning" (*Battler*, 17 February).

For months they had either ignored, apologised for or dismissed as irrelevant the viscerally anti-communist, pogromist and socially reactionary character of the "Khomeini revolution". Now that Khomeini is in power his program is no longer so "irrelevant": he is putting it into practice. Khomeini has already declared holy war on the "communists": "Satanic elements who are worse than the Shah [are] still trying to create problems", he raved over "Voice of Islamic Revolution" radio on 20 February. "I won't tolerate anyone who is anti-Islamic. We will crush them" (*Australian*, 21 February). And next will come the workers, the national minorities, the women -- all the "anti-Islamic" elements.

So even as they were hailing the "revolution", the opportunists have begun to notice some flaws. Immediately following the 11 February uprising the IS went so far as to accuse Khomeini of aiming for a "new regime just as oppressive as the old one"; the SLL by 20 February had shifted its hopes from Khomeini to "the Fedayeen group" and the "armed workers of the Tudeh (Communist) Party" under whose blows the now despised ayatollah was supposedly teetering and about to



Revisionist papers *Workers News* and *Direct Action* hailed the reactionary mullahs' victory as a victory for the Iranian working class. But now Khomeini prepares to crush the workers and the left.

Notice to Subscribers

There was no February issue of *Australasian Spartacist*. All subscriptions will be extended by one month.

...or blood of "satanic" leftists ...ts hail mullahs' ...n"

fall. The SWP, by far the most enthusiastic, consistent (as usual) and coolly dishonest of the left-wing mullah-lovers, took fully until 28 February to finally notice the new regime's "moves to re-establish order as part of its preparation for declaring an 'Islamic republic'".

If the flip-flops have been notably ungainly, it is because Khomeini's reactionary promise is being fulfilled all too quickly for the usual artful cover-ups. Throughout the upsurge which brought down the shah, the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) *alone on the left* raised the call, "Down with the shah, down with the mullahs!", warning of the reactionary potential of the Muslim fanaticism whipped up by the Shi'ite hierarchy. Our stand was denounced by Khomeini's left tail as "reactionary" or "sectarian", and by the mullahs as -- "communist" (see box). Yet it did not require the fall of the shah to reveal the reactionary objectives of Khomeini's movement. If the bloodbath awaiting the Chilean masses in 1973 should have been recognised with the historical lessons of the popular front and able to see through Allende's "socialist" rhetoric, the reactionary character of Khomeini's

Khomeini was not out to topple the shah in order to secure the right to strike and organise for workers, equality for women, an end to national and religious persecution, freedom of expression -- he openly opposed all these things. He understood that his opposition to the shah had nothing in common with that of class-conscious workers. He repeatedly spurned alliance with "Communists" against the shah. He explicitly supported the resurgence of the veil and opposed the entry of women into the workforce, contemptuously rejecting social equality for women, a touchstone of historical progress. He plainly repudiated freedom of religion or a secular state: "it is the religious expert and no one else who should occupy himself with affairs of government" (*Islamic Government* -- a book based on Khomeini's lectures in exile in Iraq). He denied freedom of the press, frankly indicating he merely wanted to replace the shah as censor.

It is no accident that Khomeini did not come out openly against the shah until 1963, after the shah's declaration of female suffrage and land reform. Before the shah's "white revolution", mullahs -- of which there are some 200,000 -- or religious foundations owned a quarter of Iran's land, demanding two-thirds or more of a peasant's crop as rent. As part of his attempt to resolve the contradiction between Iran's feudal superstructure and the enormous recent expansion of capital, the shah was forced to expropriate some of the church land and to curtail some of the clergy's privileges, splitting the clergy and fueling a movement behind Khomeini to restore the old feudal caste privileges and lands and preserve the age-old superstitions that are the mullahs' stock in trade.

The core of Khomeini's mass movement, like Jaamat-i Islam of Pakistan, the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world or the National Salvation Party of Turkey has been the economically declining petty bourgeoisie of the bazaars. The tithes levied on the merchants and shopkeepers sustain the mullahs' network of mosques, schools, printing presses etc. The tra-

ditional connection is buttressed by the intersection of the mullahs' desire to return to the days of Muhammed and the *bazaaris'* dreams of reversing the capitalist concentration grinding them under. Playing on the shallow character of the shah's modernisation and the regime's brutal repression -- and given the vacuum of even a democratic, much less a proletarian, opposition -- the religious opposition was able to pull behind it broad masses of the oppressed who mistakenly saw it as a challenge to the real crimes of the Peacock Throne.

Is Islamic reaction irrelevant?

A serious theoretical justification for support to the mullahs is impossible within the framework of materialism, so the revisionists did not attempt any. Eager for a piece of the action, they professed in unison a perverted objectivism as the flimsiest of theoretical covers: the involvement of the masses in the movement simply rendered its openly, consciously reactionary leadership irrelevant.

"Whatever the religious form that the revolution in Iran presently takes, its content is the worldwide movement of the working class and peasantry against imperialism" assured *Workers News* (16 February; emphasis in original). The SLL in any case has no objection to theocratic dictatorships in principle (witness its fealty to Libya's Qaddafi). The *Battler* (2 December) felt compelled to publish "The truth about Khomeini", defending him against the label "reactionary":

"True, Khomeini is essentially a religious leader. But he has come to symbolise total opposition to the shah in a country which has only recently been industrialised..."

The IS blithely accepted that "Khomeini can re-



Muslim nationalists in Bangladesh killing Biharis: a glimpse of things to come for Iran's national minorities.

store calm for a while" after the shah's overthrow, "But not for long". Only "long enough", perhaps, to decapitate a proletariat and ship communists off to concentration camps?

The SWP school of falsification

The SWP simply (except in rare instances) avoided so much as a mention of Khomeini and the mullahs and instead *fabricated* a "progressive" mass movement:

"While religious leaders have attempted [!] to place themselves at the head of the struggle against the shah in order to prevent it from 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." (*Direct Action*, 9 November 1978)

The new regime has demonstrated its "progressive" character already -- by banning marches, demanding press censorship and refusing to legalise the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party. Trade-union rights? Ask any oil worker forced back to work by Khomeini. As for national minorities, Khomeini's commitment to their rights is attested to by the scores of dead following clashes between pro-Khomeini forces ("the mass movement") and Kurds demanding national autonomy and by the thousands of Afghani migrant workers rounded up for deportation by provincial "revolutionary committees".

Only on 25 January did *Direct Action* meekly observe that "Khomeini appears [!] to have no intention of allowing the Iranian people to choose either the members of the next government or the form of future rule". Two weeks later this piece of prescience was followed with a timorous complaint that Khomeini's proposed referendum for an Islamic republic posed a "danger" of "creat[ing] illusions that an 'Islamic republic' represents a real alternative to the rule of the shah and imperialism" (*Direct Action*, 8 February).

A "danger" of illusions! Where was the SWP all that time during which millions marched in the streets chanting "Allah is great" and Khomeini repeatedly called for a return to the 1906-07 constitution which gave the mullahs veto power over legislation? When mobs of Khomeini's fanatical supporters rampaged through the streets attacking such manifestations of "decadent" West-

Continued on page seven



SWP hides Khomeini's program for women: "Death or the veil".

movement was apparent to anyone who read the daily papers.

At least the Mensheviks tailed the bourgeoisie!

The classic rationale of the Mensheviks for class collaboration in the Russian Revolution was that backward countries could not escape a definite stage of capitalist development. History has proven that the resulting strategy of a "two-stage" revolution, in which the working class is relegated to a supporting act for the bourgeoisie in the name of a "democratic" stage and the "premature" struggle for workers power postponed (indefinitely), leads to sordid betrayal and bloody disaster. That the Iranian bourgeoisie subordinated itself to Khomeini is a measure of its historical bankruptcy. Only the revolutionary power of the socialist proletariat -- guided by the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution -- can smash the fetters to social development imposed by decaying feudalism and imperialist capital, and complete the democratic tasks of land reform, separation of church and state, national liberation, sexual equality etc.

But no self-respecting Menshevik could ever swallow the support of today's "Trotskyist" opportunists for "progressive" mullahs who don't even pretend to have a democratic program. "The aims of the Muslim priests are no longer [!] those of the Iranian workers" (*Battler*, 17 February) pontificated the IS after the fact. No longer?! When were they ever? This was not a bourgeois movement with which the proletariat in a backward country could bloc while seeking to expose the bourgeoisie's incapacity to carry out even its own bourgeois-democratic program. There is nothing to expose with Khomeini -- he is only doing what he said all along he would!

Interview with Khomeini aide

The following is an excerpt from a 7 January BBC interview with Ibrahim Yazdi, a secretary to Ayatollah Khomeini and now deputy premier in the Bazargan cabinet.

BBC: "How do you see your relationship with the Communists? They have been in the past formidably strong, and they have spoken out about the desirability of forming an alliance with you..."

Yazdi: "Number one, as the ayatollah has said, even for the overthrow of the shah we will not cooperate with the Communists..."

BBC: "But they give you their support -- orally, in their newspapers they call for a united front..."

Yazdi: "Well, they call for it, but they never did anything. They call, 'Down with the mullahs, down with the shah'. That's not supporting the Islamic movement."

Spartacist delegate leads anti-scab fight at Council AUS on its knees

"The future of AUS is very much in doubt", intoned its retiring "left" president, Peter Noonan, as he kicked off this year's AUS (Australian Union of Students) Council on 8 January. On that at least, the 230 or so delegates (of the 330 expected) could agree. Harassed by reactionary Liberal government legislation and still licking the wounds inflicted by the 1977 bureaucratic clique war between the Maoists and the "Left Caucus" leadership team, AUS had barely crawled through 1978. And when the delegates finally trooped off the Monash University campus, bleary-eyed and frustrated, they knew that nothing had changed.

For the uninitiated left-wing delegate who might have been taken in by all the rhetoric about a "progressive and fighting union" spouted by "Left Caucus" supporters like the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party/Socialist Youth Alliance (SWP/SYA), this was a rude awakening to the reality of "serious" student politics. AUS Council was a kindergarten parody of a bourgeois parliamentary talking shop: the pervasive political cynicism and shameless wheeling and dealing; the mind-zapping 20-hour sessions relieved only by farcical procedural squabbles which teetered between bureaucratically contained anarchy and outright lunacy; the competition in juvenile idiocy between the Tory larrikins who follow Fraser and the ocker larrikins who worship Mao; the ambitious Young Labor types who viewed the proceedings with unconcealed contempt.

And the vaunted dogfight between "left" and right? Here was CPAer Gary Nicholls urging virtually everyone but the NCC to unite in practical action, and his right-wing "social-democratic" colleague on the NSW executive telling everyone how easy it had been to work with the "pragmatic" Nicholls. Here was Eddy Chen, leader of the Maoist Overseas Student Service (OSS) which praises in its paper the underground Malayan Communist Party (MCP), playing chess and cracking jokes for an entire session with Liberal Michael Kroger and his mates, who uphold the Menzies "tradition" which includes the dispatch of Australian troops to help crush the MCP in the 1950s. The self-styled "Moderate Feminists", the NCC's women's auxiliary, did battle with the "liberationist" feminists around the Women's Collective -- but the battle was muted by an earlier "sisterly agreement" not to heckle each other as an act of solidarity against manipulative male politics. And, above all, there was the "Left Caucus", capitulating up and down the line to the bosses' state as well as the student right, in order "to save the union" ... and hold onto the leadership.

"Even a trip to the toilet needs a lawyer's OK"

In sharp contrast to this political vaudeville show was the intervention of Spartacist delegate Neil Florrimell from LaTrobe University and other Spartacist League (SL) supporters, whose clearcut presentation of the revolutionary communist position on the major international and national issues, as well as on defence of AUS and student

rights cut through the vacuous "fight the right" rhetoric of the reformists.

The legal commission set the tone of the entire gathering. The leadership had moved it up early because it was council's "most important business". The business? AUS lawyer Bruce Curl laid down "Kaye's Law", telling this "autonomous" body what it could and couldn't do according to Justice Kaye's unchallenged "ultra vires" decision in 1977, *without so much as a whimper from*



the fake lefts. Liz Parker of the dissident-Maoist Movement for Independence and Socialism did rise timidly to inquire why these repressive provisions did not apply to "other" trade unions. Curl quickly put her straight: AUS just wasn't a union like other unions, but rather a "voluntary federation". Indeed, imagine the AMWSU being told it could not give money to any "outside political cause" but the most narrowly defined "education" issues. Only one voice spoke up against this cowardly capitulation. Of this "union" which dared not even give financial support to a workers strike, Comrade Florrimell said: "AUS can't even go to the toilet without getting permission from its lawyers".

The leadership's "strategy" to save AUS is hinged on building "practical" campaigns around "bread and butter" education issues like a "living wage" (ie higher TEAS) for students, with no means test. So docile are these "communists" that the CPA and SYA stood vehemently opposed to our demand for open admissions (combined with TEAS at least equal to the minimum wage). To them this minimal democratic reform is "ultra-left". That anyone claiming to be a partisan of the working class would reject as "ultra-left" a fight to break down the existing class privilege and bias of the education system and to assure open access to tertiary institutions for the mass of the working people is a hypocritical travesty. And it provided an opening in the education plenary for a vile red-baiting attack against the CPA and SYA. A Young Labor supporter named Tullgren cynically denounced the "juvenile Marxist and Trotskyist elitist rubbish" which favoured primarily middle- and upper-class students with a "living wage" at the expense of the bulk of working-class youth. The reformists were defenceless, outflanked by a rotten ALPer.

"Left" and right unite to fight ... for scabbing

After the legal commission with the right wing assured that the "left" was not about to "finance the world revolution", the subsequent "deliberations" were anti-climatic, listless and poorly attended -- with one dramatic exception. A full house attended the debate on the Spartacist motion calling on AUS to support all workers strikes, to "ensure that all strikes by campus workers or staff are respected" and to bar AUS executive member and CPAer Gary Nicholls "from holding office in AUS" for his scab role in a staff strike at Sydney University last year (see "CPA, SRC leaders scab at Sydney University", *ASP* no 57, September 1978). Intense interest had been building for days. Maoists and even some Zionists and right wingers had taken to calling Nicholls a "scab" and ludicrously slandering him as a "KGB agent". The Left Caucus, trepidatious, not only excluded us from their caucuses but even directed their supporters never to second or otherwise support our motions.

In an atmosphere of tension Comrade Florrimell rose to outline the facts of the incident, slamming the CPA and SYA for giving this scab political shelter with the refrain that as an SRC officer he was responsible to his student constituency and not the SRC staff. Florrimell exposed the hypocritical scab-baiting of the Maoists, who had attempted to delete the call for support to workers strikes from our motion to make it palatable to their right-wing allies. Nicholl's "defence" rested on the following piece of sophistry by Sydney Uni feminist Lesley Podesta: since the strike was not smashed, Nicholls couldn't have *really* scabbed!

In the midst of the discussion Noonan, who was chairing, attempted to bureaucratically suppress

the motion entirely by "explaining" that a motion calling for dismissal of officers required 24 hours notice -- after the motion had been on notice for days! This ignited an hour-long disruption effort by the OSS Maoists, which criminally allowed a reluctant Nicholls to avoid speaking in his own defence.

After the vote, many Left Caucus supporters whimpered to us that they felt compelled to defend Nicholls -- who they agreed was indeed guilty of scabbery -- "against the right". What cynical crap! Right-winger Alex Naple had risen to denounce our motion as a "Spartacist plot to commit students to support all strikes" (!) and Michael Kroger's Liberals demonstratively abstained on it (however much they may have revelled in Nicholls' squirming). A real defence against the right would have seen these watery "radicals" of the Left Caucus standing up in defence of the most elementary principles of working-class solidarity and enthusiastically purging from their ranks a small-time class traitor, instead of providing the right with a grotesque example of "communist" duplicity.

Not a world parliament

While AUS Council was in session, Iranian students were marching through the streets of Teheran and the Vietnamese army was marching through the streets of Phnom Penh. Yet the international commission attracted less than fifty students, an echo of the leadership's plea not to return to the "bad old days" of acting like a "world parliament" and a reflection of the depoliticisation of the campuses following the antiwar movement. Most of the interest focused on the perennial debate as to whether AUS should be so daring as to *have* a Middle East policy.

News of the destruction of the Pol Pot regime triggered a hysterical Maoist hue and cry against the "little and big hegemonists", much to the delight of the cheering and clapping right-wingers. While Nicholls "refuted" the Maoists by baldly denying there were any Vietnamese troops in Phnom Penh, only Spartacist supporters raised the call for revolutionary defeatism and sharply opposed the pervasive liberal anti-communist hatred of the USSR which unites the Left Caucus, Maoists, Zionists, social democrats and Liberals. Naturally, whenever anyone so much as mentioned the Soviet Union the SYA went into hiding, refusing to endorse our Trotskyist stand for unconditional military defence of all the deformed workers states against imperialist attack linked to the perspective of anti-bureaucratic workers political revolutions.

They did however stir themselves to attack our insistence on the urgent need for the Iranian workers and peasants to break from the reactionary mullahs and fight for a workers republic to replace the bloody Pahlavi dynasty. SYAer Greg Adamson successfully counterposed a motion to ours which did not so much as mention the ayatollah Khomeini or his mullahs. Adamson only reluctantly acquiesced to a CPA amendment which cynically admitted "that some of the religious opponents of the Shah, especially at leadership level, are reactionary and anti-women". That being said, the amended motion as passed of course still endorsed the mullah-led movement. In replying to our "sectarian" attacks on Khomeini, Adamson had the audacity to compare Khomeini's movement with Castro's 26 July Movement in Cuba in the fifties, explaining that Castro didn't start out as a Communist either but the logic of the anti-imperialist struggle etc etc.... We only wonder if these "best builders" of feminism, the SWP/SYA, noticed that a number of feminists voted against their motion, convinced by our arguments on the viciously anti-women character of the "Khomeini revolution".

In cynical reformist fashion, transforming setbacks into steps forward, *Direct Action* (25 January) headlined its report on the Council: "Student union swings left". The evidence? Council supported compulsory unionism -- as even the NCC did -- and backed Khomeini's Islamic "revolution"! In any case, with the SWP/SYA's "industrialisation turn" in full swing, most of the SYA delegates did not even bother to attend most of the sessions of what was only recently, in the SYA's eyes, "one of the most militant and democratic unions" in the country.

Students must be won to workers revolution

Even when judged honestly by the SYA's myopic standards, AUS has not swung left, and certainly not when viewed from a revolutionary perspective. Nor could it, fundamentally. Our intervention was not intended to nudge AUS to the left, but to make clear to subjectively revolutionary students

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that a necessary defence of AUS and student rights against bourgeois state attacks only has meaning within the framework of a struggle against the bourgeois state and the capitalist system. A number of our motions won some support from left-wing delegates. But many of these delegates, while concerned to distance themselves from the two-bit reformism of Noonan, the CPA and the SYA, are themselves politically paralysed by the quite real prospect of AUS coming apart. But commitment to an all-inclusive student "union" leads inevitably to conciliation of the right wing and kowtowing to the state. Even with the shadow-boxing that passes for political struggle between "left" and right in AUS, a hard difference on anything so significant as the Middle East threatens to rip it apart; how much more sharply would AUS be polarised and split over a real fight for full support to the workers class struggle in the heat of a mass strike wave or similar social upheaval. As we explained in a *Campus Spartacist* distributed at AUS Council:

"... for our part we have no wish to be indefinitely 'united' with anti-working class forces like the NCCers, the Liberals, Zionists etc. We are not terrified by the prospect of AUS disintegrating because this is ultimately inevitable. As the class struggle intensifies the various components of AUS will necessarily take a stand for or against the working class. The answer to those leftist students who seek to fight against the capitalist ruling class is not an all-inclusive student 'union', but the organisation of revolutionary students into a communist youth movement, linked to a communist workers party and committed to the program of proletarian revolution." ■

Khomeini...

Continued from page five

ern culture as movie theatres and liquor shops, the SWP excused it all as evidence of the mullahs' "anti-imperialism".

What if women in the mullah-led mass demonstrations wore the *chador*, the Islamic cloak-veil re-imposed by the mullahs as a sign of fealty to Khomeini? What if the marchers chanted "Death to the veil"? *The SWP simply did not report it.* Instead they enthused that women were "taking part" in the movement. Or else they dismissed the *chador* -- which is more like a straitjacket than a "veil" -- as though it were simply a feminist fashion, not the mark of medieval enslavement. Dispatched to Teheran as a reporter by the US SWP, Cindy Jacquith told of a huge 27 January march against Bakhtiar in which she participated:

"To our left is a contingent of 1000 women, all in black veils, with raised fists. Women are nearly half the demonstration. These sisters [!] chant: 'It is good the students and workers are getting together.'" (*Intercontinental Press* [IP], 19 February; emphasis added)

So much for "consistent feminism" -- the veil is not even something to be opposed!

What will the SWP report when its newly proclaimed sister section in Iran (formerly the Satar League) is suppressed, as it inevitably will be, by a consolidated "Islamic republic"? It will come as news to those who get their information from *Direct Action*. The SWP has refused to report numerous instances of anti-communist attacks by the Khomeini forces in the past. *IP* (27 November 1978) itself ran one interview with an Iranian describing one clash at a university rally in which Muslim students successfully insisted the leftists take down their red banners, and remained hostile even when the capitulatory leftists chanted, "Greetings to militant Khomeini". But much more never reached the pages of SWP publications. For instance, *Le Monde* (19 January) described one incident at Teheran University in which "religious groups from outside the university ... organised in small shock brigades" attempted to break up discussions with leftists concerning the "Islamic republic", "disrupting everything to cries of 'la hisb, illa hisb allah!' ('No party but the party of Allah!')". And this from the 23 January *Le Monde*:

"On Saturday several thousand left-wing demonstrators were brutally attacked and dispersed on Pahlavi Avenue by religious militants to

the now-habitual cries of, 'The only party is the party of Allah' and 'Ruhollah is our leader'."

Opportunists never learn

Two years ago in Pakistan, a similar Muslim-led mass revolt against the repressive regime of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto produced its own "Islamic republic". Then, too, the leadership was irrelevant: "Although the [Pakistan National Alliance] leadership is dominated by rightist elements, including former military officers and Islamic religious figures, it has been able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of protesters on the basis of its opposition to the present regime" (*IP*, 9 May 1977). And, of course, "A PNA government formed out of the present upsurge would be under strong pressure to concede democratic rights" (*IP*, 6 June 1977). Sound familiar? A month later, after the army coup which installed the self-styled "soldier of Islam", General Zia, *IP* (18 July 1977) admitted that "... the whole repression is being carried out under an Islamic cover". Today Pakistan is still under martial law; and Zia's most recent contribution to social reform has been to decree the literal application of Koranic law: floggings, amputations for thieves, the stoning of adulteresses.

In Iran today and in the past few months, it was not an easy matter to proclaim opposition to the mullahs, to swim against the stream, to confront not only isolation but fanatical lynch mobs. But had any grouping in Iran done so, even a small one, today the oil workers being forced back to work, the leftists perplexed by Khomeini's "anti-people" pronouncements, even the liberals genuinely concerned with enlightened democracy would have had a force to turn to for guidance in the struggle first against the shah, now the mullahs. In 1914 the Bolsheviks were hounded and beaten by their fellow workers for agitating against the imperialist war. Only thanks to their principled stand were they able, three years later, to lead the Russian workers to power. *They had not lied to the workers.*

It was not the palpable pressure of millions in the streets and the threat of violent repression that the SWP, SLL and IS succumbed to. So fearful are they of political isolation that even from a distance they feel the need to ingratiate themselves with social forces that stand openly for social regression and feudal caste privilege. If the disciples of Khomeini consolidate their rule, the SWP may be forced yet again to admit that the "irreversible dynamic" only succeeded in replacing the shah with an equally repressive regime. But it is already proven the SWP can learn nothing. If a bloody defeat of the Iranian masses at the hands of the mullahs and generals is to be avoided, it will not be thanks to the likes of the SWP. A party based on Bolshevik intransigence must be forged from among Iranian leftists, unswerving in its principles and committed to the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. ■

China invades...

Continued from page three

peoples and sub-peoples of Indochina can freely choose their national destiny. Will the Vietnamese establish a multinational state based upon the Russian model of a federal union, or upon the ethnic totalitarian model of Han chauvinism? In any case we place no confidence in the bureaucracy to carry out this necessary amalgamation of the Indochinese peoples on a just and equal basis. We call instead on the working masses to oust the bureaucrats -- the only guarantee to achieving a real socialist federation.

Our conclusion therefore is that only history can decide the justice of Vietnamese and Cambodian relations. But the current Chinese adventure in Vietnam in imitation of the feudal warlords and in collusion with the latter-day warlords of imperialism can only reinforce existing national animosities between the Vietnamese and the Chinese peoples, and between the Vietnamese and the Khmers: *China: don't be a cat's paw of US imperialism -- Get out of Vietnam now! Not counterrevolutionary "detente" with imperialism, but workers revolution!*

It is already very late in the epoch of imperialist decay. It is almost 60 years since the Red Army, having defeated the Polish capitalists, failed to concentrate on the East bank of the Vistula, opposite Warsaw. Thus the young, isolated Soviet state lost the common border with a Germany yet facing proletarian revolution. The crisis of leadership was not at that time resolved in favour of the German proletariat. Berlin and that wave of world revolution were thus lost. Now once again the new alignments for a coming global war are being ominously sketched out on the horizon. The task of Marxists is not to hide this terrible reality but to tell the simple truth: Only workers revolution will prevent nuclear annihilation. ■

Cambodia...

Continued from page three

vention. Defending Vietnam is one thing -- permissible in the eyes of bourgeois liberals; lining up with the militarily powerful Soviet Union would be an unforgivable act of disloyalty to the US ruling class.

It was only natural that the SWP's "third camp" impulses would find their theoretical expression in its refusal to recognise Cambodia as a workers state. To justify his abandonment of Soviet defencism in 1940, Max Shachtman denied the Marxist understanding that the property forms are decisive in determining the class character of a state, pointing instead to the necessity for political control by the working class. The US SWP has now lifted a page from Shachtman, arguing that Cambodia is not a workers state because, "The Kampuchean working class had no stake whatsoever in the nationalization of property, carried out without its participation ..." (*Intercontinental Press*, 26 February).

The SWP analysis introduces the refinement that even "controlled" participation by the working class is enough to make collectivisation socialist in character. But the difference between a capitalist and a workers state is tenuous indeed if it is made to depend on whether or not a Pol Pot, a Mao or a Castro (the SWP's "revolutionary" Stalinist hero) gets some workers together for a staged rally following the bourgeoisie's ouster. Which act of "controlled participation" by the FUNSK will the SWP now seize on to declare Cambodia a "workers state"?

Following the Vietnamese occupation a statement by the "majority of the Bureau" of the "United" Secretariat (Usec), the "International" the SWP nominally adheres to, implicitly repudiated the SWP's line by putting the blame for what it called a "disastrous turn of events" on all "the ruling bureaucracies, without any distinction among them" (*Intercontinental Press*, 5 February). The next week's issue carried excerpts from more than a dozen papers of Usec sections, with as many variations in line, generally following the lines of the 1969-78 open factional split in the Usec between the US SWP and its satellites and the European-centred followers of Ernest Mandel. So now the ex-factions find themselves publicly at odds on the class character of the Cambodian state and what side to take in an ongoing shooting war. The Mandelites have their own reasons for the confusion among themselves. Throughout the Vietnam War they politically tailed the Indochinese Stalinists. How can they explain the "disastrous" betrayals of those who they claimed in 1975 were "empirical revolutionaries" who had created essentially healthy workers states?

In recent years the SWP has been preparing the groundwork for a refusal to defend the Soviet workers state against US imperialism: uncritically supporting pro-imperialist Soviet dissidents, calling for a pacifist policy of nuclear disarmament, and asserting that in the nuclear age military defence of the USSR has become "meaningless". With a USSR-US military confrontation just over the horizon in the present war, they have ignored the threat to Soviet Russia and begun dabbling in openly "third-campist" theories. How long before the SWP "discovers" that, as in Cambodia, the workers in the USSR also do not exercise political power and also do not warrant defence against imperialism? ■

Defend the Stock Exchange Ten!

Last August police indiscriminately arrested ten anti-budget protesters outside the Sydney stock exchange after a demonstration inside had allegedly caused several thousand dollars' property damage (see *ASP* 57, September 1978). Now the Special Branch -- the political arm of the NSW police -- has escalated the charges against two of these militants, Phil Lee and Martin Hirst, from "malicious injury to a building" to participation in a "riotous and tumultuous assembly". This latest little-used charge carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. Now the cops do not need to prove that Hirst and Lee actually did any damage but merely that they were present!

So far one of the other defendants has been acquitted and several others have incurred minor fines. But the seriousness and blatant frame-up character of the charges facing Hirst and Lee underline that the viciously anti-working class Special Branch means business. Thus it is urgent that the whole left and workers movement mount a vigorous campaign in their defence to demand:

Drop the charges against Hirst, Lee and all the Stock Exchange Ten! Stop Special Branch spying and harassment of the left and labour movement! Disband the Special Branch!

Donations can be sent to: Stock Exchange Ten Defence Committee, PO Box M8, Newtown South, NSW, 2042.

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



Down with Khomeini's "Islamic republic"! Workers must rule Iran

Khomeini and the mullahs are victorious in Iran. The political revolution though unconsolidated has won. On 12 February thousands of armed civilians rode through the streets of Teheran in open trucks, shoulder to shoulder with newly converted soldiers shooting bullets into the air to glorify the "Islamic republic". The world media spoke with cautious expectation of these people it calls the ayatollah's "revolutionaries". The *New York Times* went so far as to call the shah's short-lived stand-in Bakhtiar "the Kerensky of his country".

After two days of flaming barricades and pitched battles on the streets, after the military defeat of the shah's loyal goose-stepping "Immortals" and the dramatic declaration by the armed forces chief that the army would remain "neutral" and respect "the will of the people", after the sacking of Bakhtiar's palace and offices and his replacement by Khomeini's hand-picked prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, after the arrest of the shah-loyal military and SAVAK officers -- after it was all over, the *Washington Post* proclaimed: "Today, Iran belonged to the revolution". This was the revolution that the reformist left in and out of Iran had been organising for. Now they have it.

The working masses who took to the streets against the hated shah must not be fooled. This is not a victory for the working masses. Today, Iran belongs to middle-class Islamic reaction in a bloody alliance with a section of the same officer corps which has dealt out decades of death and oppression on behalf of the Pahlavis. They are prepared to do the same now.

No sooner had Khomeini taken power than he ordered striking oil workers to return to work; street marches were banned; civilians were told to return arms they had captured from the shah's arsenals. While the "anti-imperialist" ayatollah was embracing Palestinian nationalist leader Yassir Arafat and handing over the keys to the Israeli embassy to Arafat's PLO, Khomeini's chosen replacement for armed forces chief of staff was assuring US imperialism that Iran's sophisticated US-supplied weaponry would not find its way into the hands of nationalist guerrillas and that the door was open for US technicians to return to Iran. The degree of democracy which the mullahs had in mind for the Iranian masses was foreshadowed by the wording of the "referendum" announced by the new government: "Instead of a monarchy do you want an Islamic republic?"

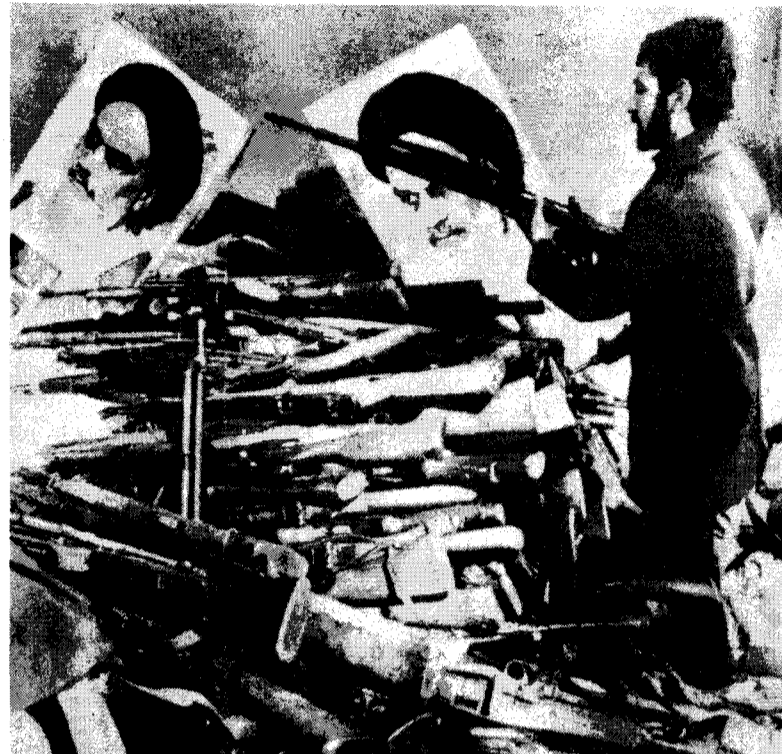
Victory ushered in a process of political fissioning among the forces following Khomeini. His climb to power owed much to the social power of striking oil workers and the heroism of air

force technicians, both educated and Westernised groups whose support does not stem from Muslim devotion. And even the ayatollah's religious support ranges from pious technocrats like Bazargan to rich merchants of the bazaar to fanatical theology students to "Islamic-socialist" demagogues. The Western press shuddered with anxiety about the "disintegration" of the army when the soldiers of the 16th Armoured Division outside Teheran rejected the commander newly appointed for them by the mullahs. The sight of armed leftists roaming the streets of Teheran sent shivers up the spines of imperialist editorialists. Deputy prime minister Amir Entezam complained that major industries were not functioning "because workers spend all their time holding political meetings". Oil workers as well as the guerrillas demanded a share in governmental power. Carter's aides issued ominous warnings that the US would deploy "military force" to protect its oil supplies in the Middle East.

But if the turmoil following the fall of the old regime was expectable, so is the reaction of the new regime. The army, with Khomeini's blessings, is moving deliberately to restore discipline; the left is being warned that the noose is tightening around its throat. In response to demands by the radical Islamic guerrillaists of the Mujaheddin and the "Marxist" Fedayeen for a "people's army", Bazargan ordered the army to set up a national guard -- whose ultimate aim is the disarming of the guerrillas. When the Fedayeen called for a march through Teheran to be held on 22 February, Khomeini issued strident denunciations of "Satanic elements" and warned that "we are strong enough to deal with them" (*Financial Review*, 21 February). The march was called off and replaced by a rally at the University of Teheran the following day.

Khomeini pulled the masses of Iran behind his drive for power, but his victory was assured by the capitulation of elements of the higher levels of the military. It is this army and police that the "revolutionary Islamic republic" will unleash against the workers, peasants and minorities whose demands for democratic rights, land reform and national equality will not be met by the cabal of clerical reactionaries and bonapartist generals now in power.

While the reformist left in and outside Iran



Khomeini demanded that arms be turned in to the mosques; "Satanic" leftists will be "crushed".

touted Khomeini as the "intransigent" opponent of the shah and his uniformed butchers, the international Spartacist tendency maintained that Khomeini and the mullahs would seek to incorporate a section of the old military. While the ayatollah was still in Parisian exile we wrote:

"Both reactionary forces squaring off for state power need the army to rule. And neither wants a prolonged civil war which could allow openings for the left to gain mass influence, particularly with a powerful proletariat in the wings. Khomeini's intended Islamic 'republic' rests not on mass support but on the sword of the military...." (*"Iran Showdown"*, *Workers Vanguard* no 224, 2 February)

Holy war, civil war and class war

Khomeini's surprisingly easy victory was accomplished because the overwhelming majority of the shah's personally selected generals did not think they could rely on their army in a full-scale civil war against the bulk of the population. In a speech to his commanders given before he fled the country, the shah had ordered them to do just that.

The Imperial Guard was ready and willing to carry out His Majesty's kill-crazy orders. Had such a confrontation erupted into civil war, Marxists would have militarily supported the popular forces rallied by the mullahs against an intact officer caste, even as our intransigent political opposition to the reactionary-led movement sought to polarise the masses along class lines and rally the workers and lower strata of the petty-bourgeois masses around the proletarian pole.

Victory came easily to the mullahs largely because their political revolution did not challenge the class basis of Iranian society. The isolated shah spoke for no significant section of the ruling class. And he had no point of support other than a military apparatus hung in mid-air and his family (which numbers in the thousands). Thus it was only the "Immortals" that would go down fighting. And when they did, the officer corps cracked.

The loyalty of many armed forces commanders was not to the shah personally but to the military machine built for the shah by the US government. And armed forces chief Garabaghi and his fellow generals were not prepared to risk disintegration of the military by ordering conscript troops sympathetic to Khomeini to crush the Islamic uprising. In the key battle this was precisely the choice posed to the generals.

The fall of the shah was conditioned by the belief of the US government and CIA that the



Anti-shah fighters triumphant after fall of Bakhtiar. Officer corps did not oppose mullahs' victory.

Continued on page four