



Khomeini fanatics provoke imperialist threats

Iran crisis

Over a month after well-organised Muslim "students" seized the American Embassy and staff in Teheran, the most dangerous imperialist power in history remained locked in confrontation with a priest caste of Shi'ite mullahs who want to return to the seventh-century puritanical desert "paradise" of the Koran. In Iran, the young zealots' seizure of the building and 62 (now 49) American hostages and their demand for the extradition of murderous ex-dictator Shah Reza Pahlavi from his New York City hospital bed has revitalised waning popular support for the theocratic regime of Ayatollah Khomeini. In the United States it has provoked a wave of virulent anti-Iranian jingoism. As the deadlock continues and the diplomatic/economic warfare escalates, the threat of a vengeful US military strike has grown.

The American ruling class in all its imperialist arrogance and bourgeois hypocrisy has never been able to understand the explosive hatred Iran's ex-ruler evokes among his former "subjects". Nor has it understood that the Islamic zealot who deposed the shah means what he says when he talks about purging Iran of "corrupting" Western influence. They thought that they could weather the outcry which they knew would result when they allowed the bloody torturer and mass murderer who once occupied the Peacock Throne to jet to New York for expensive medical treatment. And they didn't anticipate that Iran's theocratic despots would not only back but help mobilise the students' action, force the impotent Bazargan government to resign, and declare a virtual holy war against the US.

US Imperialism prepares to strike

Now the US rulers, enraged and embarrassed by their helpless inability to free the hostages or bring Khomeini to "reason" through the normal diplomatic channels, are prepared to wreak a potentially deadly revenge -- even if the hostages are freed. US President Jimmy Carter made



Chauvinist backlash in US to Khomeini's jihad against "Satan America".

US—hands off Iran!

the first open threat on 20 November. Warning of "other remedies" he has positioned naval task forces in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, including five giant aircraft carriers within striking distance of Iran. His pronouncements have become more and more intransigent. *Newsweek* (3 December) quoted a White House aide: "even if we wanted to, we couldn't send [the shah] back. He's become a symbol of American determination". As for the hostages, Carter has already written them off in a statement which explicitly put "protect[ing] the honour of our country" before the "safety and release of the hostages" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November).

Exactly what upholding such "honour" might entail given the impossibility of an Entebbe-style rescue raid was summed up by the *Financial Review's* Washington correspondent Brian Toohey in a 30 November article:

"... the National Security Council under Mr Zbig Brzezinski wants to use naval air power to smash Iran's oil refineries. A live option

in the Pentagon is for the bombing of Khomeini's headquarters in the holy city of Qom. It is not hard to see almost any President other than Carter sanctioning an invasion of the oil fields."

Liberal imperialist "dove" George McGovern has been right out in front, calling for "an outright blockade to prevent anything from moving in or out of Iran" (*Newsweek*, 3 December). But all these options are fraught with dangers for world capitalism, among them the malicious destruction of the vital oil supplies and the economies of other imperialist powers and supposed US allies, especially Japan. Toohey also notes the risk of "a possible Soviet intervention". In addition, the embassy's occupiers have mined the building and have vowed to blow themselves and their captives to kingdom come in the event of any attack.

Even if the shah leaves the US for Egypt -- perhaps the only country willing to take him -- the fanatics in the embassy have declared that the ayatollah's promise to put the hostages on trial for "espionage" and punish them (presumably by execution) will be quickly carried out. Were they to do so it may well make a US military strike inevitable (if the decision hasn't been made already). If he acts, Carter will have the support of a backlash of "national unity" in the US which has even bolstered the tattered image of this desperate man, heretofore almost certain to lose the 1980 presidential elections, as a "national leader". Reacting to a feeling of helplessness, in the currently prevailing mood many Americans would undoubtedly approve of nuking Qom, the religious capital of Khomeini's Persian-chauvinist Islamic sect.

The Muslim zealots who follow the ayatollah have violated diplomatic prerogatives in a way not even the Nazis did. But Carter is invoking

Continued on page two

Inside

...page 4



Split in the

United Secretariat

Special Supplement

Spartacist League leads anti-KKK rally in Detroit

For mass
labor/black
action to
smash the
KKK & Nazis!



Iran crisis . . .

Continued from page one

the felt outrage of the American people in order to get re-elected to the White House over the bodies of tens of thousands of Iranians, whose just desire to take their own country back has been mobilised by a clerical-medievalist fanatic. US imperialism has well earned the hatred of the people not only of Iran but of the entire Near Eastern region, and a military intervention could not fail to shake the stability of the despotic US-backed Arab regimes who supply the advanced capitalist countries with oil.

For decades the essential thrust of American policy toward Iran has not been just to plunder the country, but also to make it a fortified regional bastion in an anti-communist crusade against the Soviet degenerated workers state on Iran's northern border. The US has continued to supply Khomeini's Iran with weapons for exactly the same purpose: to aim them against the Soviet Union. The possibility of a confrontation was pointed to last month when the Russians staged an "exercise" involving the airlift of 10,000 men to South Yemen and Ethiopia. The USSR remains the chief obsession of anti-communist cold warrior Brzezinski. And as John F Kennedy showed in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, when it comes to taking the world to the brink of a nuclear holocaust, the US bourgeoisie is no more rational than the ayatollah of Qom.

The American working class must militantly oppose these war threats. In the event of actual US armed intervention, workers and socialists must stand for military defence of Iran, while opposing the reactionary mullah rulers, and stand ready to adopt a revolutionary defencist position toward the Soviet degenerated workers state as well.

Mad mullah's fake "anti-imperialism"

The mullahs claim that the American embassy in Teheran has been a "nest of spies". The *New York Times* reports that "The White House and State Department have refused to comment directly on that accusation". And for good reason. Under the shah, the US embassy was notorious as a branch office of the CIA, a coequal and sometimes predominant seat of power with the Niavaran Palace. High CIA officials were posted to Teheran as American ambassadors, including Richard Helms and William Sullivan. We shed no tears for the imperialist diplomats, NSA/CIA agents and career Marines captured by the Islamic students.

Having made this clear, we must point out that this was hardly the heroic Tet offensive of 1968 which besieged the US embassy in Saigon, nor the 1958 rock-throwing attack on then Vice-President Nixon in Caracas -- both clearly blows by left-wing forces against US imperialist strongpoints and rulers. The mullahs have not been waging a struggle against imperialism at all -- on the contrary, Khomeini's government had most recently been negotiating with Washington for resumption of billions of dollars in military aid to be used against Kurdish rebels, Arab oil workers, Iranian leftists and the Soviet Union. The Teheran embassy seizure and hostage-taking was a *diversion*, fundamentally an attempt to refurbish Khomeini's anti-shah credentials in a period of growing disillusionment with, and opposition to, his clerical-reactionary rule.

At least in the short run, it has clearly worked. And Carter's threats of imperialist intervention have reinforced the effect. Thus the Kurds in rebellion against Khomeini's Persian-chauvinist regime have vowed to fight alongside the government against any US attack, and announced a ceasefire -- provided the regime ended all military operations in Kurdistan (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November). It is not clear how long this sort of truce -- not only with the Kurds but also with the growing and desperate numbers of unemployed who stormed government offices in Teheran in early November to demand

work, the Arabs of Khuzistan, and the oil workers -- can remain in effect. However, Carter's belligerence has provided the tinpot "Imam" with just the excuse his reactionary regime needs to justify the privation of the Iranian masses for a generation: blame it on the Americans.

Internationally, the Khomeinists' action has met with disfavour from governments of almost every stripe. The USSR (which no doubt figures its Teheran embassy could be next) voted in the UN Security Council to condemn the seizure, and in its propaganda has backed off from its initial muted approval to call for the release of the hostages. Even radical-bonapartist "Third World" regimes usually eager to thumb their noses at Yankee imperialism have been noticeably reticent. Diplomatic immunity and territorial sovereignty of embassies are seldom violated even by nations at war, though every diplomatic office conducts its share of spying and intelligence gathering. These diplomatic rules of the game are necessary to maintain international relations between nation-states, until the nation-state itself has disappeared in a socialist world.

Khomeini explained his order to the students to release women and black hostages not suspected of being spies as an expression of Islamic "regard" for women and the oppression of racial minorities in the US. Nonsense! Islam's "regard" for women is expressed in the *chador*, the head-to-toe veil which is the symbol of their enslavement and imprisonment within the home. Islam has also given institutional support to the slave trade, and to this day black chattel slavery exists in Islamic countries on the Arabian peninsula. And Khomeini's "regard" for Iran's ethnic, national and religious minorities

AS FOR THE SHAH ...

Proletarian revolutionaries demand, "No asylum for the butcher shah!" Of course, it would be fitting if this sadistic murderer is shipped back to Iran to experience the vengeance of a "justice" which equals that of his own reign in the lack of due process and the barbaric practice of torture. But it is Khomeini and not the sick and deposed "king of kings" who is now the oppressor of the Iranian toiling masses. And we demand that Khomeini be put on trial for his own crimes by his own victims, through proletarian revolution!



is demonstrated by his savage persecution of the Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Turkish-speaking nationalities and minor religions (like the Ba'hai).

Chauvinist backlash: "a 'USA first' America"

The mullahs claim their action is directed against the US government which granted the shah "medical asylum" and not against the "American people". But that is not the way the American people are viewing it, as Iranian students in the US who carried Khomeini icons in the streets of Washington, DC and Houston, Texas as if they thought they were in Teheran soon found out. In Houston a November 7 Iranian student march calling for the extradition of the shah was followed the next day by a protest by 1500 angry demonstrators at the Iranian consulate, chanting "Take Your Oil and Shove It", burning Iranian flags, waving the Stars and Stripes and brandishing signs that said, "Camel Jockeys Go Home".

It is not just the right-wingers who have been organising these demonstrations. The past month has seen a proliferation of acts of anti-Iranian chauvinism, from bosses who have sacked their Iranian employees to the owner of a brothel outside Reno who banned Iranian students until the hostages are released, fed up, he said, with the hypocrisy of students who support Khomeini's puritanical policies yet patronise his establishment. Watching American tourists and contractors working in Iran dragged out of hotels and offices and thrown in with the hostages, hearing Khomeini denounce not just the "nest of spies" but also the "corruption" of "decadent Jude-Christian" Western culture in his holy war against the "Satan America", the US population has responded with a wave of national chauvinism, catalysing the emerging mood of "a 'USA first' America", as the *Financial Review* put it.

Carter responded first by ordering a chauvinist round-up of the estimated 50,000 to 100,000 Iranian students in the US in order to deport those who do not meet stringent visa requirements. While students who hailed the ayatollah should have no complaints about returning to join the "Islamic Revolution", such expulsion orders would also be applied to those who opposed both the shah and Khomeini, who would face "revol-

utionary tribunals" no less sinister than the shah's vicious SAVAK. On the other hand, one can be sure that the papers of the more than 270 Iranians studying in the US military academies will be found to be in order.

We oppose these draconian reregistration/deportation orders above all because of the history of such acts of victimisation and the precedent it would set. In this century the US has seen for example the 1919-20 Palmer Raids in which thousands of foreign-born communists, socialists and anarchists were expelled from the country in response to the Bolshevik Revolution. Carter's measure recalls in particular the rounding-up of Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals during World War II when 160,000 were held in West Coast prison camps. Such racist measures as Carter's decree lay the basis for restrictions like an internal passport system, and must be opposed by all those concerned to defend democratic rights.

Carter also upstaged the Khomeini regime's threat to cut off petroleum exports to the US by ordering a ban on 12 November on Iranian oil (which supplies about 4 percent of American consumption). Then, when the Iranian government threatened to withdraw its investments and deposits from US banks -- estimated at \$8-12 billion -- Carter froze these assets. Khomeini's response was to have his (now dismissed) foreign minister Bani Sadr announce that Iranian external debts contracted under the shah's rule would not be honoured. The escalating economic tit-for-tat has worried the world bourgeoisie: "Financial wars are just as dangerous", warned the *Financial Review* (16 November), as journalists elsewhere began checking their copies of Paul Erdman's novel *The Crash of '79* to see if it wasn't all coming true after all.

The report of the holy man's purely retaliatory debt cancellation was enough to send the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) into a delirious spasm of praise. It would be a "staggering blow to imperialism", a "gigantic step forward" for the "Iranian revolution", raved *Direct Action* (29 November). With 12 of *their own comrades* of the now-split Iranian HKS still sitting in the ayatollah's death cells, these contemptible mullah-lovers then went on to compare Khomeini's announcement with the repudiation of all foreign debts by the Bolshevik government of Lenin after October 1917! In fact Iran's bank officials have been frantically reassuring imperialist creditors that only "fraudulent debt" connected with the shah was at stake. This is not hard to understand unless one ignores, as only such unscrupulous opportunist cynics as the SWP could, the little "detail" that Russia after October 1917 was a *workers state* resting on soviet power, whereas Khomeini's Iran is a capitalist state run by a bunch of medieval fanatics.

The US government's continuing desire for a stable anti-Soviet bulwark in the Near East led them to seek an understanding with Khomeini, despite Washington's earlier unconditional backing of the shah. After the embassy takeover, the *New York Times* (9 November) editorially complained about Khomeini's ingratitude:

"He knows that Washington tried to appease him by discouraging the Shah from settling here in the first place. The Ayatollah also knows that the Carter Administration gave him military aid to crush various rebels and encouraged American business to help rebuild his economy."

By granting the shah "medical asylum", Carter gave Khomeini the pretext to channel the mounting discontent with his clerical tyranny into fury against the distant ex-dictator and the US government. Yet US imperialism itself helped create Khomeini, by helping the shah crush the labour movement and thereby leaving the mullahs an open field as the main organised opposition to the bloody autocrat. The shah's attempts at modernisation alienated all sections of society from him, especially the clergy who opposed his half-hearted reforms for *going too far*. As for the deposed monarch we are in favour of the shah getting his just deserts, with as unfair a trial as possible, and oppose any attempt to grant him asylum in the US or elsewhere. But the tyrant-in-power is no less guilty of crimes against the Iranian working people and oppressed than his predecessor.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is an 80-year-old religious fanatic convinced that he will soon be greeted by a special delegation from Allah, and ready to take everyone with him in a fiery twilight of the gods. He is determined to impose a theocratic "Islamic Republic" which is closer to Jonestown, Guyana than Calvin's Geneva; and if the Iranians are not ready, they deserve to perish. To Carter's threats he responds: "We are a nation of 35 million and many of these people are looking forward to martyrdom... After they have all been martyred, then they can do what they want with Iran". This apocalyptic vision and program offers no future to the Iranian masses. It is only through proletarian revolution, led by an Iranian Trotskyist party, that the oppressed can break the chains of imperialism and Islamic obscurantism and emancipate themselves from the shahs and ayatollahs forever. ■ (abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 244, 23 November 1979)

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: Inga Smith (production manager), David Garden (Melbourne correspondent), Steve Hooper, Chris Korwin, David Reynolds, Jim Shaughnessy.

PRODUCTION: Linda Brooke, Ron Stahlmann.

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Toni Somerset.

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.

Tamils under the gun

Down with government terror in Sri Lanka!

During the last four months on the island of Ceylon, the United National Party (UNP) government headed by President JR Jayewardene has imposed a regime of police-state repression on the oppressed Tamil-speaking minority. Using as a pretext alleged incidents of Tamil terrorism, the cabinet on July 11 declared a state of emergency in Jaffna, in the northern district populated predominantly by the Indian-derived Hindu Tamils. The following week the UNP rushed through parliament sweeping draconian legislation called the "Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act".

Under this act the armed forces and police are free to terrorize and even murder with impunity, while the government has at hand a mailed fist of reactionary sanctions that could be used at any time to smash political opposition. In particular, they will be used to suppress opposition to the economic austerity measures recently imposed by the openly capitalist Jayewardene regime, which is no less Buddhist/Sinhala chauvinist than the preceding Bandaranaike/LSSP/CP popular front. The anti-working-class measures include drastic cuts in the food subsidies on which millions depend for their daily existence.

Although the government has clamped strict censorship on all coverage of the emergency, the authorities have not been able to completely suppress news of the terror unleashed against the Tamils. It has become known that three days after the imposition of the emergency two Tamil youth were taken from their homes by the police. Later the same day they were found dead by the side of a public road, killed by blasts of gunfire and badly mutilated (see exclusive *Workers Vanguard* photos of this atrocity on this page). It is also known that a third youth, who had been arrested on July 13, was assaulted by the police and succumbed to his injuries while under detention in the Jaffna prison.

Initially, the act also empowered the police to seize and dispose of corpses in any way without a coroner's inquiry to determine the cause of death. However, this sanction was withdrawn after the Tamils living in the area where the police murdered the two youths on July 14 closed their shops and businesses in protest. Yet under the emergency act even this protest could be deemed terroristic and punishable with sentences of up to 20 years.

So far the communalist drumbeaters of the UNP have been successful. It has not been challenged by militant action of the working class, even though the cuts in consumer subsidies and the repressive powers sanctioned by the emergency act threaten Sinhalese working people as well.

But this is a testimony not so much to mass support for the UNP as to mass disaffection with the traditional reformist workers parties -- the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the pro-Moscow Communist Party (CP) -- which supported and participated in the popular-front governments of the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which predominated in the period 1964-77. During these years the LSSP and CP enabled "Mrs B" (as former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike is widely called) to break strikes, drive down the living standards of the working people, foment virulent anti-Tamil chauvinism and massacre thousands of young leftists who participated in the 1971 rebellion.

No wonder the reformists' cynical exhortations for mass opposition to the government cuts in food subsidies today largely fall on deaf ears. Routed in the general elections of July 1977 that swept the UNP into office in a landslide vote, the CP and LSSP two years later are still widely despised. It was not sheer cynicism that led JR Jayewardene to attend the funeral of LSSP leader NM Perera (who had been a top minister in the Bandaranaike coalition government) and eulogize this veteran reformist with the farewell, "Well done, thou true and faithful servant, well done" (*Ceylon Daily News*, 30 August).

But a New Left that has emerged around the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP -- People's Liberation Front) does pose more of a threat to the UNP. As a result of its 1971 uprising against the Bandaranaike popular front, the JVP is seen by many -- especially the youth, women and even some Tamils in urban centers -- as the only repository



Exclusive photos of anti-Tamil terror



Tamil youths arrested 14 July and found dead by side of road the same day. Bodies were mutilated to remove bullets.

of militancy on the island. Its politics, however, are really nothing more than a "new left" version of Stalinist popular frontism, a kind of class-collaborationism-with-a-gun reminiscent of the Chilean MIR.

Thus today no less than under the LSSP/CP/SLFP coalition, intransigent proletarian opposition to popular frontism remains the touchstone of a revolutionary perspective on Sri Lanka. Support, however "critical", to any component of the popular front is a roadblock to winning over on a principled basis subjectively revolutionary youth from the layer of militants that coalesced around the New Left Stalinist JVP.

Skimpy carrot, big stick

For more than 30 years the Ceylonese government has subsidized basic foodstuffs and provided free medical services and education. It could do so in large measure on the basis of the superexploitation the British extracted from the Tamil plantation laborers. Now the UNP and its imperialist patrons can no longer afford to expend over \$US200 million annually while the economy is ever more squeezed between soaring market prices internationally and stagnation domestically.

After the rice ration was eliminated for better-paid workers in February of 1978, the UNP now has dumped the entire food subsidy system, offering in its place food and fuel stamps for workers earning less than \$US65 a month. Even with the stamps most workers will not be able to maintain their meager standard of living, given the runaway inflation and chronic shortages of basic necessities. If the trade unions or opposition parties mount any serious struggle against the government policies, the UNP is already pre-

pared for emergency action. Jayewardene has a "strong state" now: an increasingly bonapartist regime that is closely linked to the military high command, through both political and familial ties. When the emergency was declared, Jayewardene's marching orders went to his nephew Brigadier Tissa Weeratunga, who had been appointed chief of staff of the Sri Lanka army shortly after the UNP took office two years ago.

With the declaration of emergency-in the north and the enactment of such sweeping repressive legislation Jayewardene, while claiming to protect parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka, has actually taken significant steps to make the central executive power more and more independent of legislative controls. After the UNP came to power, Prime Minister Jayewardene created the office of president so that he and his cabinet could wield more power than traditionally held by the prime minister. In addition, the UNP regime revised the election laws such that a candidate must poll a certain percentage of the vote cast in his constituency in order to be elected -- an anti-democratic system clearly intended to keep leftist parties like the JVP out of office.

Armed with an arsenal of emergency powers, the Jayewardene regime intends to bring the Tamils in the north to heel and to impose its economic policies through the classic carrot-and-stick approach. Imposition of martial law in Jaffna was clearly intended to intimidate the masses of Tamils into submission -- the actual incidence of even alleged Tamil terrorism has never assumed threatening proportions (over the last three years 15 policemen were killed, allegedly by Tamil separatists). Jayewardene would like to nip in the bud the "Liberation Tigers", young Tamil nationalists who reportedly number only several hundred, and is prepared to use the same kind of murderous repression unleashed against the leftist Sinhalese youth who participated in the 1971 insurrection.

The iron-fisted police-state measures directed against the Tamil minority have been prepared by the reactionary communalist policies that the UNP has pursued since coming to power in 1977. Last year hundreds of Tamils were killed or injured, and many more were forced to flee north, when mobs of Sinhalese chauvinists ran amok in pogroms that were encouraged, if not fomented, by the UNP. At the same time the government has called for negotiations with the bourgeois politicians of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), who did not even protest the declaration of the state of emergency or the police/army rule in Jaffna. Here the carrot is the offer to discuss "devolution" -- an autonomy ploy that would give TULF leaders a rationalization for shelving the demand for "Eelam" (a separate Tamil state), which they adopted reluctantly and reactively, and resume their role as respectable "statesmen" who since the 1977 elections command the largest opposition bloc in parliament.

Popular front paved the way

Today the opposition parties that formed the last popular-front government -- Bandaranaike's bourgeois SLFP, the LSSP and the CP -- issue polite denunciations of the cuts in food subsidies and criticisms of UNP policy in handling the Tamils. These hypocritical protestations carry little credibility, however, coming from those who have long since become identified with viciously racist Sinhala chauvinism. The LSSP once championed the rights of the Tamil minority, demanding full citizenship rights for the plantation workers and equal status for the Tamil language. But with the overwhelming victory of the first SLFP government in 1956 on the basis of "Sinhala Only" communalism and calls for "Buddhist socialism" (against the Hindu Tamils), the LSSP's tendency toward narrow national-centeredness and preoccupation with parliamentarism began to blossom into full-scale class-collaborationism and Sinhala chauvinism.

The LSSP's slide into unprincipled coalitionism had already reached the stage of definitive capitulation when after the 1960 elections, which returned the SLFP to office, it announced a policy of "general support to the government". This culminated in 1964 with the formation of an SLFP/LSSP coalition government. One of the most notorious acts of this short-lived popular-front

Continued on page six

Split in the United Secretariat

The United Secretariat has just become the "Untied Secretariat". Up until three months ago it was still balmy "unity" weather in the USec. The main factions had disbanded and Ernest Mandel was promising one and all an international that brought together "95 percent of the world's Trotskyists" (leaving aside only a few "sectarian grouplets" like the Spartacists). The "Fourth", he bragged, hadn't split in 16 years; in recent European elections "Trotskyist slates" had gotten close to a million votes. The USec was on the verge of becoming an "alternative pole of attraction" to the "3 or 4 million voters of the far left" on the old continent. Shining in its diadem would be a French section of 10,000 members. And with that, he said, echoing another centrist of the 1930s, "everything is possible!" No more. His grand schemes lying in tatters around him, Ernest Mandel looks today like a stock market speculator on the day after the Crash of '79.

Now it is the hour of split in the USec. On the eve of its "Eleventh World Congress" a provocation/expulsion/walkout has ripped out a quarter of the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR). The expellees were mainly supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT), the USec friends of Pierre Lambert's Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI). This means that the long-rumoured marriage of the LCR with the OCI is definitely off, and Mandel is left with a French section not of 10,000 but 1200. In Latin America more than two-thirds of the USec's supporters have gone with the Bolshevik Faction (BF) of Nahuel Moreno, temporarily and miscegenously allied with the OCI and certain to be expelled at the world congress (it exited along with the LTT in France). As the split spreads through the USec's crisis-ridden European sections, many would-be leftists will face the question of remaining loyal to this fake "Fourth International" or going with the Moreno/Lambert lash-up, likely to be one of the shorter-lived, rottener blocs of all time.

Le Monde (1 November) commented wryly that "the motive, or the occasion" of the split was a "difference in evaluating the Nicaraguan revolution". Occasion, si; motive, no. In a document establishing a "parity committee" of the OCI/LTT/BF, the splitters argue that:

"The danger of dispersing the forces of the Fourth International is much more serious than the one provoked starting in 1951 by Pabloism, since the attack on our principled positions is even more brutal than in 1951."

Certainly the provocations have been spectacular, beginning with the USec's support for (and alleged complicity in) the Sandinista Front (FSLN) expulsion of the Morenoite-led Simon Bolivar Brigade from Nicaragua last August (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 69, November 1979). True enough, where Pablo ordered the "deep entry" of sections of the FI into Stalinist CPs in the early '50s, today his epigones order their Nicaraguan followers to liquidate into the FSLN. But aren't Lambert/Moreno forgetting something? The USec was founded in 1963 on the basis of total support to Castroism. Where do they claim to have been for the last decade and a half?

The OCI/LTT/BF split will pick up a number of sincerely leftist elements aghast at the spectacle of their comrades being arrested at gunpoint and expelled by the Sandinista regime with the approval/aid of the USec tops. And if the issue was really that of maintaining an independent section in Nicaragua, genuine revolutionists would stand on the same side with those opposing

liquidation into the petty-bourgeois FSLN. A split along these lines could open the way to a struggle for consistent proletarian independence and against those who would build a "Trotskyist" party in order to pressure the Sandinistas. But Moreno, while a charlatan of the first order whose policies at home are deeply reformist, is an inveterate manoeuvrist given to bursts of bravado and verbal leftism -- as with the Bolivar Brigade and his Bolshevik Faction. Yet the BF presents itself in tandem with Lambert's hardened and not-very-left social-democratic OCI, whose pseudo-orthodox critiques of Mandel are a cover for virulent anti-Communist Stalinophobia. No real Trotskyist can join with those who sided with CIA-financed counterrevolution in Portugal!

The big loser in the present USec split will surely be Ernest Mandel, who bit off more than he could chew and now has lost the whole pie. Externally he has sought to broker a welter of

enough, but the discovery is about 18 years late). And the parity committee adopted a BF proposal for a "democratic conference open to all forces claiming to be Trotskyist" -- ie, a counter-world congress -- for January 1980. This was the chance which the "historical leadership" of the LCR, Alain Krivine and Daniel Bensaïd, had been waiting for. After dragging their feet for years at the Mandel- and SWP-backed proposals for a rapprochement with the OCI, they gleefully jumped at this provocation. That same evening they circulated to the cells a motion demanding condemnation of the OCI/LTT/BF meeting as a "split attempt". Not voting for the motion would mean instant "exclusion".

The big showdown came at the extraordinary LCR congress which began November 1 in the Paris suburb L'Hay-les-Roses. When the motion condemning the "parity committee" was raised, over a quarter of the delegates (37 LTTers and 4 Moreno-



Jack Barnes, now top-dog in USec; Ernest Mandel (right) -- left lamenting the ones that got away.

opportunistic fusions with anti-Trotskyist "far left" reformists, from the OCI and Pablo's AMR in France to Tony Cliff's SWP in Britain, all of which have fallen through. Meanwhile, within the USec he has allowed the hardened reformists of the American Socialist Workers Party to pick off and grind down centrist Mandelite oppositions in their own bailiwick (eg, the demolished Internationalist Tendency in the US, the absorbed Canadian RMG and Australian Communist League). Up until now Mandel has had the votes to call the shots at the USec HQ in Brussels, but Barnes' SWP has the tremendous advantage of a consistent political line. With the departure of the LTT/BF and various leftists they drag along behind them, the USec will likely consolidate around a reformist axis with the SWP holding the whip hand.

The hammer goes down at L'Hay-les-Roses

The pretext for the split in the United Secretariat was a deliberate provocation by the OCI/LTT/BF bloc. The weekend prior to the LCR conference scheduled to elect delegates for the USec world congress, the Lambertists and Morenoites met to form a coordinating committee for the stated purpose of fighting the SWP leadership's capitulation to the Nicaraguan FSLN. Barnes and company were accused in the founding document of the parity committee of "abandoning the terrain of Trotskyism and the Fourth International and going over to the terrain of Castroism" (true

ites, out of 160 delegates at the conference) refused to vote and walked out. In an article entitled "The French LCR Spits Out Its Seeds", *Liberation* of 2 November noted the "satisfaction" and rapidity with which the LCR tops "seized the pretext thus offered by their adversaries". After all, six weeks beforehand it was simply a question of what pace for a fusion with the OCI which would have left Krivine/Bensaïd out in the cold. Now they're back in the saddle again, and with the most obstreperous oppositionists gone their "solid" 43 percent plurality on the CC should be enough to ensure a more-or-less stable "minority cabinet" in the hectic politicking at the LCR helm.

On the other side there is the momentum of an aggressive split, but with plenty of fraying at the edges. The Morenoites, of course, knew long before that their number was up and they were just carrying out rearguard actions as they pulled out of the United Secretariat. (Their factional rampaging has been so blatant that more than two years ago Mandel/Barnes threatened to chuck them out at the next opportunity). Lambert has nothing to lose at this point on the USec side, and presumably felt it better to start carving up the spoils of their raiding operations before Moreno starts making inroads north of the Pyrenees and the Alps. In France it is calculated that the take from the LCR will be roughly 350-400 militants. Already the expellees have set up their own formally independent group, the Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (LCI), and have started publication of a paper, *Tribune Ouvriere*. In due course this set-up will probably simply be swallowed whole by the OCI.

However, there are those who may balk at the prospect of life under Lambert. In France the parity committee gambit was decided at the top, leaving many rank-and-filers disoriented as the next day they were faced with peremptory demands for a loyalty oath. Meanwhile, across the channel in Britain LTT leader John Strawson was talking of the "French split" and swearing fealty to the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the USec.

Strawson is a political quick-change artist whose main talent lies in borrowing a political line from elsewhere and building an opposition around it. In 1976 he led an "anti-Pabloite"

Continued on page five

Get the goods!

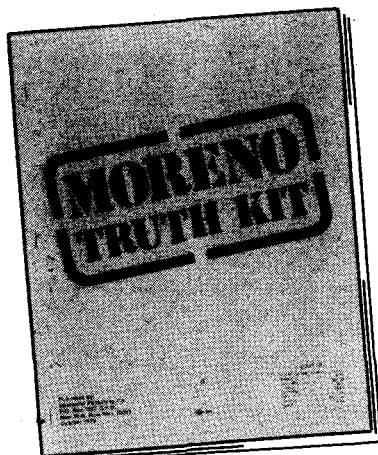
Faced with the cynical treachery of the USec from Iran to Nicaragua, many honest would-be Trotskyists will be looking for a revolutionary alternative. This "Moreno Truth Kit" is to warn the workers movement against one particular self-styled "alternative": Nahuel Moreno, leader of the Argentinian PST and Bolshevik Faction of the USec. We say -- and the bulletin explains why -- that this man is an adventurer, a political chameleon and financial swindler! If you want the real facts about his political record, get your copy now.

Forty-one pages of documentary exposure:

- ◆ Moreno in Argentina I: From Left Peronism to Social Democracy
- ◆ Moreno in Argentina II: Back to Peronism
- ◆ Moreno's Left Face: Portugal, Angola, Eurocommunism
- ◆ Opportunist Chameleon Sui Generis
- ◆ Moreno the Swindler

Price: \$1.50

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



Split in USec . . .

Continued from page four

split out of the IMG to join Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL). Less than a year later he turned round to lead a tiny pro-Mandel split from the WSL back to the IMG. A staunch opponent of the SWP(US) line while in the WSL, Strawson wasted no time in making a bloc with SWP(US) supporters once back in the IMG, at the 1978 national conference, only to go on to his current stint with the LTT -- with yet another different program! Clearly he relishes the role of resident house critic, albeit his "criticisms" come from all over the political map. Certainly he finds this position more congenial than the prospect of deep immersion in the British Labour Party. For were he and his clique to follow the example of the French LTT, they would find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to unite with the OCI's British affiliate, the moribund Socialist Labour Group. This puny gang of reformists has toiled for the past few years to build a geriatric base for the Tony Benn-led *Tribune* "lefts" within the Labour Party.

But whether the individual actors like it or not, the logic of the international split will be felt -- and sooner rather than later. In Sweden and Germany, Bolshevik Faction forces appear to be playing for time in order to consolidate support. But in due course, they too will make their move. And with domestic crises in the sections reinforcing the international disarray, the shockwaves are likely to be far-reaching.

Non-stop never-ending crises

The context for the USec split is one of permanent crisis in virtually every European USec section. Most dramatic has been the French LCR, which ever since its last congress in January 1979 has been *without a majority* for any tendency. At that meeting the outgoing leadership Tendency 4 received 143 votes, while the semi-oppositional Tendency 3 (of H Weber and J-M Vincent) got 142. (LCR superstar Alain Krivine was not part of any of the tendencies). The hot issue was whether or not to "fuse" with the by-now substantially larger OCI, which claims to have over 5000 members, with Tendency 3 being hard opponents of fusion. The Bolshevik Faction Declaration/Platform quotes a graphic description of the LCR Political Bureau functioning in this period which sounds more like a truce committee than a PB of an ostensibly Marxist organisation: "The PB ... is a sum of individuals (who) meet once a week to make sure that no major differences have arisen since the previous meeting" (cited in [SWP] *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, no 3, July 1979).

If the LCR has long been the "star" section of the Mandelite majority, the British IMG was also one of the more important European USec sections. But it too is in crisis. Badly attended public meetings, falling membership, dwindling newspaper sales, a looming financial crisis and complete bankruptcy of political perspective have combined to engender a mood of undisguised pessimism in the organisation. Their menshevik regroupment manoeuvre, Socialist Unity, has been a clear failure. None of the groups the IMG assiduously courted were prepared to take the final plunge, but instead went off on their own kick: the anti-Trotskyist libertarian outfit Big Flame is still spewing out its anti-Leninist garbage in various "solidarity" groups, while mention of Sean Matgamna's International-Communist League (I-CL) is more likely to prompt the question, "What is

that?", since the individuals around the Matgamnaite-backed paper *Workers Action* are now well and truly buried in the world of organic factions within the Labour Party.

To stave off total disaster the IMG tops are currently weighing a couple of get-rich-quick schemes which they hope will get them out of trouble: a "proletarian turn" to the trade-union bureaucracy such as that being pushed by the American SWP currently, and an attempt to fuse/liquidate into Tony Cliff's state-capitalist SWP.

So eager are sections of the IMG leadership to make it with the Cliffites that even the most feeble criticisms have been thrown out the window. Thus at the final session of this year's



Pierre Lambert (top), Nahuel Moreno (below): Rotten, yes; but a bloc? Not for long.

Marxist Symposium -- the annual fashion show for the IMG's latest intellectual fads -- in an atmosphere reminiscent of a chummy Oxford Union debate, Tariq Ali proposed to the SWP cadre present that as a "serious revolutionary organisation" the SWP should "join the Fourth International". And to help things along Ali explicitly added that membership in "the FI" did not involve international democratic-centralist discipline.

As for the Russian question, which *should* be the key difference between the ostensibly Soviet-

defencist IMG and the third-camp SWP, this is given short shrift: "We do not believe that the state-capitalist analysis of the SWP necessarily excludes it from the Fourth International", wrote Ali, John Ross and national secretary Brian Grogan in a recent reply to the SWP on international perspectives (*International Socialism*, Autumn 1979). And as authority for this egregious revision of the Trotskyist position, the Three Musketeers of Pabloism name none other than Trotsky himself, despite the fact that Trotsky made unambiguously clear the "full political incompatibility of defeatism in relation to the USSR with membership in a revolutionary proletarian party" ("Defeatism vs Defensism", *Writings* 1937-38). Lest anyone have any doubt, the SWP and their "International Socialist" allies throughout the world showed definitively what their "state-capitalist analysis" meant when they buckled under imperialist pressure and abandoned military defence of the North Korean deformed workers state in 1950 -- almost 30 years ago.

But a sure index of the IMG's chronic condition is the very fact that it considers the superficially more stable SWP to be in better shape than itself. The real state of the Cliffites emerged last year when an investigatory team sent out by the SWP Central Committee came back to confirm a grim picture of massive inactivity, rapid membership turnover and failure of even minimal paper sales. In the same SWP *Bulletin* (December 1978) five Glasgow cadre trenchantly described the CC's "fact-finding mission" as "nothing so much as a Red Cross visit to a disaster area", adding: "It will not be news to anyone that the SWP is a bit lost at the moment. *Socialist Worker* reflects that general lack of direction, and feeds the demoralisation within the party.... Today the SWP is not an organisation of conscious revolutionary cadres...." And this is the group the IMG is losing members to!

Barnes calls the shots now

On top of this the IMG is badly internally divided. At its congress to elect delegates to the world USec meeting, the leadership under John Ross squeaked by with 52 percent, with three opposition tendencies receiving roughly 15 percent each. Elsewhere the story is the same. In Germany last year the Political Bureau of the GIM became so inoperative due to clique/tendency squabbling among the leadership that a tie-breaking vote was given to the USec, in effect moving the PB to Brussels. In Mexico a section of the USec group there split out to join the Mexican Communist Party -- the party which organised the assassination of Trotsky in 1940. In Spain, the LCR there is in acute organisational/political trouble.

In their factional declaration, the Morenoites refer to many of these situations, but fail to provide any explanation of the political origin of the malaise of the Mandelite ex-majority in the USec. Their document notes that after the "new mass vanguard" evaporated following the forced-draft cooling down of the pre-revolutionary situation in Portugal (November 1975), Mandel's International Majority Tendency (IMT) had to find a new tactical orientation. This it did, in the form of becoming the loyal left critics of a series of popular fronts (France, Italy, Spain). But because Moreno and company have *the same policy or worse* toward the Stalinists' and social democrats' class-collaborationist blocs with the bourgeoisie, the Bolshevik Faction makes *no fundamental critique* of the IMT's post-1975 policies (other than accusations of lingering "ultraleftism"). Yet it is precisely the collapse of the French and Italian popular fronts which placed the Mandelites in their present dilemma. As *Le Monde* of 1 November put it:

"... within the LCR, the policies outlined by the leadership of the movement over the course of the last years have been subjected to revision after the failure of the Union of the Left without another policy having been clearly defined."

Mandel's tendency is that of a rapidly rightward-moving centrism, in the tow of "Euro-communism" and lacking any current real opportunities to tail a mass movement. But while the Mandelites whirl around looking for a new vanguard in the ecology movement, a belated feminist upsurge, lost-cause nationalists (Corsicans, Bretons), the Saharan Polisario Front -- *anything!* -- the American SWP has the political advantage of knowing what it wants and a consistent reformist program to get it. On the prosaic day-to-day level this is seen in the USec's SWP-initiated program of "industrialisation", the attempt to become advisers to dissident union bureaucrats. But reformism is not just doing donkey work for liberal and social-democratic labour fakers. At bottom, when the crunch comes, it means *counterrevolution*. It means supporting Mario Soares' CIA-financed Socialist Party in Portugal in 1975, or remaining pro-imperialist neutral in the face of the imperialist invasion of Angola in 1975-76.

It also means *betrayal*, if necessary of their own "comrades" -- which is why the SWP *leapt* at

Continued on page seven

Thug attack on French Trotskyists

On 13 November, in front of the Mutualite in Paris, a group of supporters of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), sympathising section of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), were physically driven away by a goon squad of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI). The OCI had called a meeting on Nicaragua with the participation of the newly-formed Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (LCI), the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency and Nahuel Moreno's Bolshevik Faction, to which "all international Trotskyist forces" had been invited.

As soon as the LTF group had begun to hand out leaflets and sell its publications, about fifty members of the OCI goon squad immediately intervened, violently driving off the LTF supporters, hitting some of them and ripping up leaflets and newspapers. Others who protested this aggression were also attacked. But the action was clearly aimed at the LTF, since salesmen of *Rouge*, *Tribune Ouvriere* and *Revolution Internationale* were not bothered. This is how the OCI -- long notorious on the French left for its thug tactics -- hopes to silence those who can expose what they really stand for.

The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) was quick to seize this opportunity to try to score some points off their competitors in the OCI.

Their paper *Rouge* ran an inaccurate account of the incident, and LCR leaders Alain Krivine and Lourfon promised to print an LTF statement on the assault in the 23 November issue of the paper -- only to change their minds when they saw that the statement contained "political characterisations", ie criticisms of the LCR. For example, the statement pointed out that only the previous month, the LCR itself had forcibly expelled a spokesman for the LTF from an LCR meeting on Nicaragua when he attempted to criticise the United Secretariat's capitulation before the Sandinistas.

Fear of our revolutionary program is what provokes these thug attacks. Any attempt by militants now in the LCI to generalise their leftist impulses will take them toward the LTF's consistent Trotskyist opposition to the opportunism which unites the LCR and OCI despite their current differences -- witness their common support for the victory of the mullahs in Iran. But these hoodlums had better watch out: our politics have already found partial and contradictory echoes among leftish LCI members. And as the betrayals of both the OCI and LCR gangs of cynical revisionists become clearer, so will the sole revolutionary alternative: the authentic Trotskyism of the iSt. ■

Sri Lanka . . .

Continued from page three

regime was the Sirima-Shastri Pact legalizing the forcible deportation of tens of thousands of Tamil plantation workers to India.

The latter, generally referred to on the island as the "Indian Tamils", were largely landless "low caste" peasants brought from southern India by the British to work the upland coffee (later tea) plantations in the middle of the last century and have been denied all citizenship rights since independence. In contrast, the "Ceylon Tamils" of the north and the eastern coast, whose ancestors inhabited the island more than a thousand years ago, were allowed to retain their representation in parliament even after the "Indian Tamils" were disenfranchised.

Bandaranaike's coalition government fell after only eight months, brought down by the principled opposition of two Members of Parliament from the left wing of the LSSP, Edmund Samarakkody and Meryl Fernando, who refused to vote approval for the work of the bourgeois popular front. Six years later Sri Lanka was again under a coalition government, this time of the SLFP/LSSP/CP, and "Sinhala Only" became the official government policy in every field. Thus the "Ceylon Tamil" intelligentsia, who had enjoyed enhanced access to positions in the British colonial bureaucracy, by fiat became illiterate in the official language of their country. Buddhism was made the state religion. And the "Indian Tamils" on the plantations bore the brunt of pervasive economic discrimination. Sinhalese chauvinism on the key issues of language rights, university admissions, land colonization and employment was more intense under the coalition than earlier under the former UNP regime, so that even the bourgeois Tamil leaders of the TULF felt compelled to adopt the demand for "Eelam".

Life for the Ceylonese working class grew ever more grim with each passing year of the popular front. What limited state control and nationalization of the economy was imposed by the government served only to stifle the motor of capitalism, producing stagnation, unemployment and parasitic bureaucratism. And when in 1971 the petty-bourgeois radical JVP launched an ill-prepared insurrection by un- and under-employed Sinhala ex-students, including many young women, the "socialist" coalition imposed a draconian state of emergency and unleashed the military and police to hound, murder, mutilate and maraud through the insurgent-held areas.

After seven years of popular-front government, which brought nothing but false promises and privation, the masses enthusiastically returned to office a nakedly Tory party in a country where even the Buddhist monks speak of socialism. Popular frontism, as Leon Trotsky wrote, is together with fascism the last defense of the bourgeoisie against proletarian revolution. But while collaboration in the capitalist government with the parties of the class enemy by the reformist misleaders may deflect the workers' struggle, the popular front cannot provide the bourgeoisie with a stable political solution. In a July 1936 article Trotsky forcefully argued this point in respect to the Spanish popular front:

"Incapable of solving a single one of the tasks posed by the revolution -- since all these tasks boil down to one, namely, the crushing of the bourgeoisie -- the People's Front renders the existence of the bourgeois regime impossible and thereby provokes the fascist coup d'etat. By lulling the workers and peasants with parliamentary illusions, by paralyzing their will to struggle, the People's Front creates favorable conditions for the victory of fascism. The policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie must be paid for by the proletariat with years of new torment and sacrifice, if not by decades of fascist terror." ("The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International")

In most cases, unleashing the expectations of the working class, politically disarmed by illusions that the popular front is "their" govern-

ment, provokes in short order brutal right-wing military repression, as occurred in Spain in the 1930s and more recently in Chile. But a different variant was played out in Sri Lanka. The traditional workers parties were able to discipline the working masses so thoroughly that the popular front could run itself into the ground and openly reveal its bourgeois, counterrevolutionary character. In Sri Lanka the coalition government itself carried out the bloody repression of the insurgent masses.

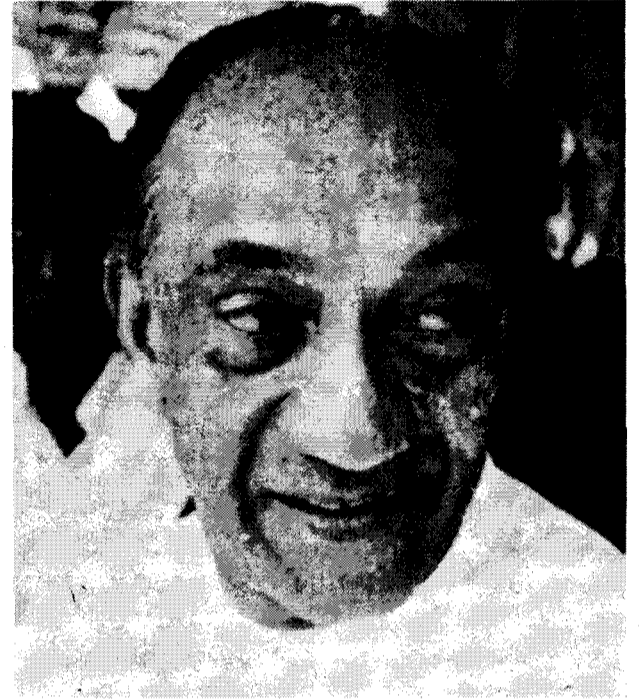
But the reformist working-class parties of the popular front reaped the bitter fruits of their betrayal. Along with Mrs B's resounding defeat in the 1977 elections (the SLFP lost 72 of 81 MPs!), the LSSP and CP lost every single one of their parliamentary seats, including some they had held continuously for 40 years! Today the LSSP is a stinking corpse. After the debacle at the polls in 1977, a section of its cadres scurried like rats from the sinking ship, launching the "LSSP (New Leadership)". The latter's main difference with the NM Perera/Leslie Goonewardena/Colvin De



Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

necessarily an outpost of Indian imperialism. In contrast, genuine Marxist-Leninists, while counseling at present against separation, nevertheless insist that as an oppressed national minority the Tamils have the right to form their own state, if they so choose.

But a revolutionary policy for the emancipation of the oppressed Tamils must go beyond the struggle for democratic rights. Even if some liberal capitalist government were to grant all Tamils full citizenship and language rights, their oppression would continue as a result of the superexploitation of Tamil plantation labor -- up to now the heart of the Ceylonese export economy. And even if "Eelam" were established in the north, allowing the bourgeois traders and bureaucrats to become the ruling class of an enclave linked to India, the large number of "Indian Tamils" locked in the Sinhalese heartland as agricultural workers would either remain the most oppressed in a virulently Sinhala-chauvinist state or at best become unemployed pariahs in the "liberated" Tamil land to the north, like the



JR Jayewardene.

Silva old guard is that the LSSP should have played a more "independent, militant" role in the coalition. Such after-the-fact excuses are the stock in trade of reformist betrayers, from the surviving leaders' of the Indonesian CP decimated in 1965 to the Chilean Stalinists after the fall of Allende.

Today the LSSP is rightly hated by the masses who identify it with racism, mass murder and economic impoverishment. Its apparatus is moribund, its Colombo office closed, its unions left to drift, and the largest public meeting that the LSSP has recently been able to muster was the funeral for NM Perera. Even the miserable Communist Party was able to mobilize more supporters than the LSSP at its last May Day rally. But it is the JVP, which at its May Day demonstration attracted some 60,000, that now appears to the masses as the only militant opposition. Thus in Ceylon, where for decades ostensible Trotskyism has been the historic left wing, the total bankruptcy of the LSSP has allowed a new generation of Stalinists to gain the ascendancy. The task of an authentic Trotskyist nucleus on the island is above all to break this hold of the popular-frontists-with-a-gun by posing itself as the only consistent opponent of class collaboration in all its forms.

Sri Lanka today is anything but politically stable. Not without reason does the UNP fear a mass protest movement akin to what led to the 1953 *hartal* (general work stoppage) or perhaps even renewed insurgency like the JVP uprising of 1971. Today the JVP has a Robin Hood respect for its insurrection, which has gone down in popular memory not as a criminal adventure like the 1921 March Action in Germany, but as a great patriotic action against oppression by the hated Bandaranaike government. Even the enemies of the JVP now grudgingly hail the revolt. Perhaps the most graphic example is the book *Insurrection 1971*, an account by the chief government prosecutor, which carries a dedication to "the sons and daughters of Sri Lanka who died in the course of the April insurrection".

In addition, the JVP has demonstrated organizational capacity and determination to become an active political factor, running candidates in parliamentary elections and making overtures to the Tamils. However, unable to grasp the key reason for its defeat in 1971 -- the total isolation of the revolt based on rural Sinhala youth from the decisive urban labor movement and Tamil estate proletariat -- the JVP remains wedded to its eclectic Stalinism and is still tinged with Sinhalese chauvinism. Thus the JVP refuses to recognize the democratic right of the oppressed Tamils to self-determination, simply calling for an "anti-communist front" to fight anti-Tamil repression. Thus the JVP opposes "Eelam" as

Biharis in Bangladesh. Additionally, a sizable component of the upland estate proletariat consists of women workers, posing the need for special methods of work to reach this key sector, while a struggle must also be waged to overcome the caste lines that divide the Tamil masses.

The oppressed Tamil population will be able to achieve social liberation only through working-class revolution, led by a Trotskyist party which fuses together the conscious vanguard of all sectors of the proletariat. The critical significance of the Tamil question for Ceylonese revolutionaries is enhanced as well by the myriad ties which link the island to the Indian subcontinent on the other side of the narrow Palk Strait. A successful proletarian seizure of power in Sri Lanka could not long survive unless it sparked a more general South Asian revolutionary conflagration. And for the laboring masses of southern India, the program of Ceylonese revolutionaries toward the Tamil minority will be seen as a key test of their internationalist intentions. ■

(abridged from Workers Vanguard no 240, 28 September 1979)

Public Meeting

KKK murders militants in Greensboro, North Carolina!

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE KU KLUX KLAN IN THE UNITED STATES

Spartacist League leads 500 at Detroit labour/black rally against Klan terror

Date: Friday, 7 December Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: Ground bar - Trade Union Club, 111 Foveaux St, Surry Hills

Tapes of Detroit rally speakers will be played at meeting

For more information phone (02) 235 8195 or write to GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

Spartacist League

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

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

Sydney Spartacist League public office

2nd floor Thursday: 5.30 to 9.30 pm
112 Goulburn St, Saturday: 12 noon to 5 pm
Sydney

Revolutionary literature

Split in USec . . .

Continued from page five

the chance to back (or engineer?) the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade in Nicaragua. And the SWP not only did the job itself, but it strong-armed the Mandelites into shamefacedly shuffling along behind it. While the latest USec resolution on the subject has the mildest critique of the FSLN, in the final analysis it goes along with the SWP's policy of *redbaiting* and *framing up* BF and LTT supporters in Nicaragua.

Iran! Iran!

But in Nicaragua it is only a dissident faction in the USec that immediately pays the price. The even greater betrayal is the one that none of the competing Pabloist-liquidationist USec gangs dares to mention, for they are all deeply complicit: Iran. For it is there that the women, the Kurds, the Arabs, other ethnic and religious minorities, the oil workers, leftists, homosexuals and drinkers are now suffering murderous repression at the hands of Ayatollah Khomeini and his Islamic fundamentalist mullahs. The 12 members of the USec's HKS now sitting on death row are the least of the thousands of victims. For over a year we have exposed how the SWP, Mandelites, Morenoites and Lambertists all hailed Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" as "anti-imperialist", "one of the greatest revolutions of the century" (this from Moreno, of course, who does everything with bombast), "the beginning of the proletarian revolution", etc. The international Spartacist tendency *alone* said, "Down with the Shah, Down with the mullahs" and warned that Khomeini would put "women in veils, workers in jails". We, and only we, told what would come if the Iranian proletariat did not forge its own independent leadership.

But finally it was too much for even Iranian USecers, and following the HKS' shameful plebiscitary "election" for an Islamic "Council of Experts" last August the "fused" (SWP/Mandelite/OCI) Iranian group has come apart at the seams. The HKS was patched together early this year as Iranian exiles returned from Europe (Mandelites) and the US (SWP), with the SWP supporters arriving on the scene first and dominating the new organisation and its political line. As the most rabid mullah lovers and legalists, the SWPers naturally wanted to participate in the rigged "vote", even though Khomeini was denouncing all Marxists as "Satanic elements" and had already arrested more than a dozen HKSers. But as the ranks began to get worried about what was in store for them, the Mandelites got a majority in favour of boycott and flew off to Europe to get USec backing. While they were away, however, Babak Zahrahi, leader of the pro-SWP forces, overturned the decision and publicly announced the HKS would participate in the voting. The result was an open split, now consolidated into essentially separate organisations, as Mandelite candidates withdrew at the last minute.

So the HKS split becomes part of the crisis in the USec, and in September the LTT issued a statement condemning the SWP for "its shameful policy of 'participating' in the ... so-called 'election' to a supposed 'Constituent Assembly'...." But where did this policy come from? The LTT only denounces it for having "ruined the unity" of the HKS in the "initial moments of the Iranian revolution". That "unity", which included all of the competing USec factions, was based on the program of helping the butcher Khomeini to achieve power. The "disunity" comes when it is time to pay the piper -- and it is not the SWP that flinches at the bloody sight.

No, in fact the latest word from the SWP's Zahrahi was that, "As strange as it may seem, there has never been as much freedom in Iran as now" (quoted in *Le Matin*, 3 October). The cynical leading the blind.

Recreate the Fourth International!

Those who know that Trotskyism does *not* mean telling the working people of Iran that they "never had it so good" -- and that it does mean putting forward an independent communist program, against both the butcher shah and the bloody ayatollah -- should investigate the record of the international Spartacist tendency. Those that agree with Zahrahi will find it more congenial with Barnes, Mandel, Lambert or Moreno ... provided they aren't in Iran and don't have to live with the consequences of these betrayals.

In early 1977, the iSt proposed that if, under the pressure of revolutionary events in Portugal a section of the USec had polarised around opposition to popular frontism and in favour of dual power and a Leninist party, we would welcome the opportunity to join with them in common opposition to the Mandel/SWP USec leadership. As a model for such a principled Trotskyist program we put forward a draft platform of nine points, including: no political or electoral support to popular fronts; for proletarian leadership of the national/social struggle; for military, but no political, support to bourgeois nationalist forces fighting imperialism -- build Trotskyist parties in every country; for unconditional defence of the deformed/degenerated workers states against imperialism, and political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies; against violence in the workers movement; for communist fractions in the unions based on the Transitional Program; for the communist tactic of the united front from above, for revolutionary regroupment and intransigent exposure of centrism; rejection of the claims of the ostensibly Trotskyist internationals, for the re forging of the Fourth International through the political destruction of Pabloism ("Reforge the Fourth International!" *Workers Vanguard* no 143, 4 February 1977). That is the program that stood the test of time. ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 243, 9 November 1979)

"Summer offensive" . . .

Continued from page eight

at the Mardi Gras] beaten up in his cell!"

The protesters demanded that the man responsible for prosecuting the victims after the cops were through get out; Davis and company called for all those who supported Walker's presence to applaud, and tried to get a motion voted that the protesters shut up and sit down or leave. An SL spokesman declared that this "gay rights" meeting was "a real farce. Any honest militant concerned with gay rights would walk out". The 13 protesters who did, including one member of the International Socialists (IS), were later followed out by 5 other ISers only when Walker finally started speaking.

The delegation from the IS, which remains part of the GSG, had shown up to play the role of a "loyal opposition" to the Walker invitation, which they ventured to meekly criticise in a leaflet as "politically irresponsible and naive". Although Walker's department is currently trying to get two of their members put away for up to seven years in a vicious frame-up, the ISers huddled silently in their chairs throughout the protest. When the call for a walkout came, they stayed glued to their seats -- except for putative IS leader Mick Armstrong, that is, who found himself alone outside in the hall, at a loss to explain to the protesters what his comrades were doing still inside. The embarrassed Armstrong finally slipped back into the meeting, re-emerging a few minutes later with his shamefaced comrades in tow.

Even the IS must find it hard not to gag on being in a group which sponsors their prosecutor. Yet the IS' belated exit really was an anomaly; put on the spot, they "walked out" as inconspicuously as possible. Their leaflet suggests politely that the decision to invite Walker indicates "a degree of reliance on parliament and the ALP". You don't say! But the IS has been party to the GSG's *whole strategy* of parliamentary lobbying right from the start. And of course, they still support this "summer offensive" of courting Wran's ministers. They are opposed only to *exposing* the true rotten character of the GSG, as the Walker invitation has so vividly done.

Meanwhile, inside the meeting those who remained heard "greetings" to this sham "offensive" read from the Communist Party, the SWP's Allen Myers, and ... the IS. They also heard a *political defence* of Walker from the IS' "independent" leftist GSG colleagues, who had no qualms about it. Gaye Walsh, another one of those ex-SWPers who is used to posturing to the left of the SWP, had already tried to claim that "Walker's not responsible for the cops, unlike Wran". Max Pearce -- yet another SWP dropout -- now eu-

logised him as "the only politician to have spoken up in defence of gays"(!), denouncing "the performance of that group at the back who don't even support the existence of the gay movement". Walker himself concluded his empty homilies apologetically: "I hope no one really believes that I was responsible for those arrests...."

Not responsible? Not much! Many of the charges against last year's arrested demonstrators arising from a march against the reactionary Festival of Light were dropped, but it was not Walker's fault --- the cops were caught out on a lie which ruined their frame-up case. And Walker and the cops were more successful with those of the arrested who ended up with convictions, the normal course of bourgeois "justice" for people considered "deviant" in capitalist society.

Frank Walker is no naive, starry-eyed civil-liberties lawyer. He runs part of the bosses' machinery for repression. He was at the Fourth National Homosexual Conference in 1978 when the anti-Festival of Light march was organised. Asked what the police would do, he suggested that the march be cancelled -- and warned he would take no responsibility for its consequences. *He knew!* The courts he administers are in the process of rail-roading the two IS supporters, Martin Hirst and Phil Lee, jailed during an anti-Fraser demonstration and framed by *his government's* cops. The IS reports (*Battler*, 15 September) that Walker signed their petition to drop the charges against Hirst and Lee -- with a false name. This cynical careerist gets a sordid little laugh out of trampling on the democratic rights of leftists.

As for the chimera of the "autonomous gay movement" Pearce and his friends in the GSG iconise, let them answer this: what good is a "movement" of sycophancy for gay-bashing ministerial hypocrites? What good is a "summer offensive" that crawls before enemies of gay rights?

Militant gays who are interested in smashing capitalist oppression can compare the record of this "autonomous movement" with that of the SL's communist program for mobilising the working class in struggle against the capitalist system and the capitalist state. They should examine the history of the Red Flag Union, the West Coast "gay communist" group which broke from sectoralism to fuse with the Spartacist League/US on the basis of the Trotskyist Transitional Program. The alternative is to continue on the path which led the GSG to shamelessly betray the victims of Wran's Mardi Gras rampage and the struggle for homosexual rights. For these are the inevitable fruits of vain sectoralist strivings to reform the capitalist system. ■

Frank Walker . . .

Continued from page eight


Walker, an atrocity as bad as any the SWP has been responsible for....

If it weren't for the fact that Walker is their prosecutor-in-chief, the IS would be just as eager to hobnob with this fake-left ALP parliamentarian as the rest of the GSG is. Of course the IS must be defended against Walker's vicious frame-ups: but the IS is no more capable of mobilising a class-struggle defence for itself than it was for last year's jailed demonstrators or for workers confronted with Wran's strike-breaking. *Those who are loyal to Labor in power cannot defend its victims....*

Wran and Walker have already given us an object lesson on the class character of the state toward which the GSG and IS are so obsequious. The armed might of that state is there to defend capitalism's profits and property, as well as its nuclear family and repressive morality which underpin homosexual oppression in the first place. It does not change because it is currently run by class traitors at the head of a reformist workers party.

Ultimately the gay movement sectoralism of the GSG and the fake-left rag-tag and bobtail which spawned it is a suicidal course. Revolutionary Marxists are the only consistent defenders of democratic rights for all the exploited and oppressed because we understand that the fate of homosexuals -- like that of any other oppressed group -- is determined by the course of the class struggle. What is needed in the unions is not "gay caucuses" but *class-struggle* opposition caucuses fighting for a program to defend the working class and all the oppressed, a program to smash the bourgeois state and the system it defends. Democratic rights can only be fully guaranteed with the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard party. Militants in the gay movement disgusted by the GSG's crawling should follow the example of comrade McCarthy and join the fight for such a party in the Spartacist League.

By sponsoring Walker to speak on "gay rights" the GSG has revealed its total bankruptcy in the most graphic possible way. This betrayal must not go unopposed by those who genuinely stand for homosexual rights.... ■

**Australasian
SPARTACIST** 

Subscribe 11 issues - \$3

Overseas rates:
surface mail - \$3 for 11 issues
airmail - \$5 for 11 issues (except Europe/North America). \$10 for 11 issues (Europe/North America)

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
POSTCODE _____ PHONE _____

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



GSG fêtes Mardi Gras prosecutor Gay "summer offensive" comes out crawling

Attorney General Frank Walker, Wran's chief prosecutor, opening a campaign for gay rights? Outrageous, but true -- and on the invitation of the self-styled "radicals" of the Gay Solidarity Group (GSG). Eighteen months ago the idea would have been greeted by an angry uproar from Sydney gay activists. The cop attacks and mass arrests of gay rights protesters by the Wran government, starting with the June 1978 Mardi Gras, was the most significant assault on gay rights in Sydney in recent years. It certainly should have shattered illusions that homosexuals could expect any reforms from Labor -- the ALP tops' true character as guardians of bourgeois law and order and its barbaric, hypocritical sexual repression was bludgeoned home with police batons.

The potential for mobilising a labour-based defence of the arrested protesters and of democratic rights for homosexuals was sabotaged and dissipated by the assorted fake-lefts who came together in the GSG. To the Spartacist League's (SL) call for a class-struggle defence of gay rights, a call aimed at mobilising the social power of the proletariat, they counterposed a sectoralist approach restricted to the confines of the "ghetto" community enclaves of homosexuals adopting a "gay lifestyle". They wanted to pursue the mirage of government "protection" for gays embodied in their lobbying campaign for a "gay rights charter". They slandered

the SL as "anti-gay" because as communists we put politics, not lifestyle, first; because we recognise that in an oppressive society "coming out" is a recipe for disaster as a strategy for winning homosexual rights, and can also be an invitation for victimisation for homosexual communists.

We warned then that the GSG's sectoralism was intrinsically reformist, and could only be a program for crawling before their persecutors. The GSG fake-lefts could not have more starkly confirmed this truth than with their sponsoring and defence of Walker as the keynote speaker at the inaugural meeting of its so-called "summer offensive for gay rights".

This cynical act -- refurbishing the "civil liberties" reputation of leftish ALPer Walker -- will only make it easier to smash the heads of those gays, workers on strike and others of the oppressed who make the mistake of banking on such illusions in the future. No genuine militant could have sat still and listened to this gay-bashing minister expound on "gay rights"! When

the Spartacist League organised a protest at the 21 November meeting in Trades Hall, it drew the same fundamental line as last year's campaign to defend the arrested demonstrators did: militant class-struggle defence of democratic rights versus servile fawning before "liberal" administrators of the bourgeois state.

A line of Spartacist protesters met Walker when he arrived. Chants of "no left cover for Walker, gay basher, strikebreaker" -- referring to such union-bashing exploits of Wran as his smashing of a government printers' picket line during the state elections last year -- rang out as Walker joined the "summer offensive" organisers on the platform. Several militants responded to our chant "militants to the back" by joining the protest at the back of the room. One angrily demanded to know if it was true, as the Spartacist leaflet distributed at the meeting (reprinted below) charged, that the GSG had made a deal with Walker to allow no questions or discussion in order to get him to come. Forced to admit it, one of the GSG organisers, Ken Davis (an ex-member of the Socialist Workers Party -- SWP), still tried to claim that our protest was breaching workers democracy! Earlier an SL supporter had put such mealy-mouthed hypocrisy to shame: "Frank Walker supervised the arrests of close to 200 people.... Remember Peter Murphy [CPA supporter arrested
Continued on page seven



Walker (far left) on platform with GSG sycophants.

Since when does Frank Walker support gay rights?

We excerpt below the Sydney Spartacist League leaflet distributed at the Gay Solidarity Group's 21 November public meeting.

In the winter of 1978 Neville Wran's thugs in blue rounded up 178 gay-rights demonstrators in a series of unprovoked anti-gay rampages, brutally bashing many in the process. In charge of the legal persecution of the cops' victims was Wran's sometime left-talking Attorney General, Frank Walker. Tonight's meeting has been called by the gay-lifestylist/reformist Gay Solidarity Group (GSG) to kick off what it calls a "national summer offensive for gay rights". The GSG's featured speaker? None other than Frank Walker! And to top that off, the GSG is protecting Walker from any of his victims who might want to confront him with his crimes, by agreeing to his conditions: *that there will be no questions or discussion directed to Walker while he is here!*

This obscene spectacle should be enough to sicken any decent militant. Wran, Walker and the rest of the government currently in charge of the bosses' state deserve only the hatred of homosexuals, the working class and all defenders of democratic rights. It is an outrage that any of this government's representatives, let alone

Walker, can be invited to speak to a meeting on gay rights. Why not invite Fraser to expound on the plight of the unemployed? Or Bjelke-Petersen on behalf of Queensland blacks? Or get Wran to explain class struggle to government printing workers whose strike he smashed? All militants must protest this gross insult to the victims of Wran's gay-bashing cops!

The choice of Walker to "open and introduce" the GSG's "summer offensive" exposes this campaign as a sectoralist fraud which can only fragment and dissipate any militant struggle against oppression. And it should certainly prove to anyone who still has doubts that, in the words of former GSG activist, now Spartacist League (SL) member, Jeff McCarthy, the GSG is "little more than a pressure group with a perspective of pressuring or coaxing the Wran government into lending its protection to the 'gay ghetto' -- the same government that had launched the vicious police assault" (*Australasian Spartacist* no 67, September 1979).

Gathering together members of the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party (SWP), International Socialists (IS) and sundry "independent" leftists, the GSG's main contribution to

last year's defence campaign was to successfully *smash* it. After the June 1978 Mardi Gras arrests it was the SL which successfully initiated a non-exclusionist, united-front defence campaign with the aim of mobilising the power of the workers movement behind the demands: "Drop the charges" and "Full democratic rights for lesbians and male homosexuals". The GSG and its fake-left animators stacked a meeting, took it over, and subordinated the campaign to their own impotent politics of classless, ghetto-oriented gay sectoralism. Having criminally split the defence of the jailed demonstrators, the GSG did nothing further except to beg for, as comrade McCarthy put it, "a 'charter of rights' from the government who'd just busted their heads".

These days the SWP has dropped "gay pride" in line with its reformist "industrialisation" turn and is more apt to bait homosexuals as child molesters, having come out in support of reactionary "age of consent" laws (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 64, June 1979). A number of ex-SWP "independents" cast off by this turn have made the GSG their political home. But they had better forget any ideas of posturing to the left of the SWP after building a "gay rights" platform for

Continued on page seven