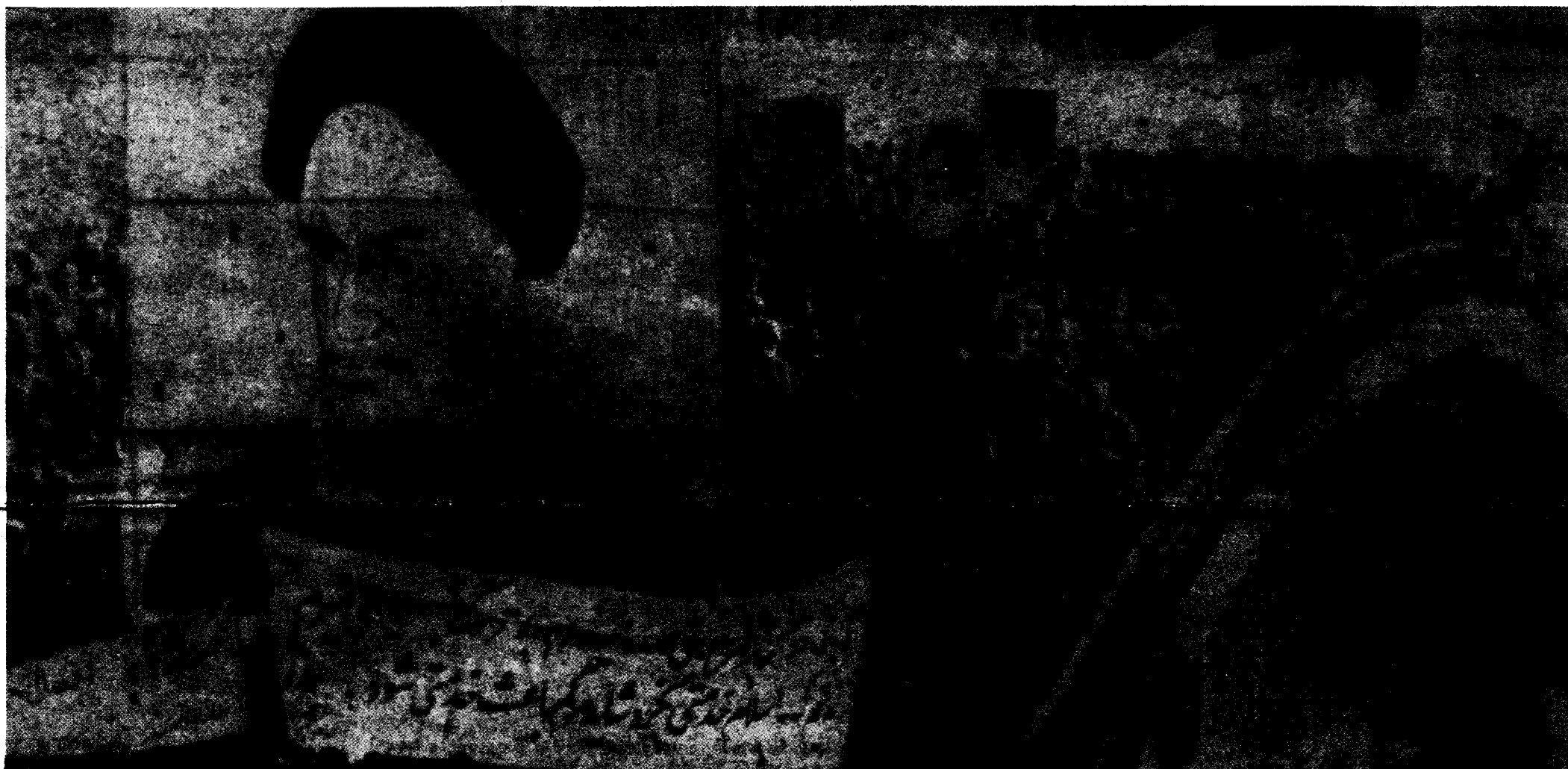




Down with Khomeini! For workers rule in Iran!



Teheran masses hail Khomeini's return. Banner in foreground reads: 'I hope my death will help the cause of Islam if my life did not'

Khomeini and the mullahs have emerged victorious in Iran. This is the revolution that the opportunist left in and out of Iran has been cheering on and organising for. Now they have it. But the working masses of Iran who took to the streets against the hated Shah must not be fooled. This is not a victory for the working masses.

Once the Supreme Military Command had declared its 'neutrality' on the afternoon of February 11, Khomeini demanded that civilian attacks on the army cease immediately. His theme ever since has been the need to 'restore order' and rebuild the authority of the armed forces. The 'revolutionary Islamic republic' is preparing to unleash the army and police against the workers, peasants and minorities whose demands for democratic rights, land reform and national equality will never be met by the cabal of clerical reactionaries, bourgeois careerists and bonapartist generals now in power.

The opportunists in and outside Iran touted Khomeini as the 'intransigent' opponent of the Shah and his uniformed butchers. But the Spartacist tendency has consistently maintained that Khomeini and his mullahs would rely on a section of the military in their struggle for power. 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....' (*Workers Vanguard* no 224, 2 February)

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. 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 bourgeoisie 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 went down fighting. And when they did, the officer corps cracked.

The shooting began at midnight on February 9 when the Imperial Guardsmen marched on the Doshan Tapeh air base in East Teheran to suppress a pro-Khomeini demonstration staged by rebellious air force technicians and cadets. The outgunned air force men defended themselves ably and were quickly reinforced by thousands of civilians armed with hoarded rifles, molotov cocktails and weapons distributed by the cadets themselves. In the hours that followed, thou-

sands more of Khomeini's followers took to the streets in defiance of the curfew.

The crack Immortals Brigade, fanatically devoted to the Shah and armed with heavy Chief-tain tanks and artillery, was fought to a standstill by cadets with rifles and teenagers often armed with nothing more than reckless courage and bottles of petrol. Then on the afternoon of February 11 the Supreme Military Command declared it had 'unanimously decided to announce its neutrality in the current political dispute in order to prevent further turmoil and bloodshed and to order all military units to return to their barracks'. Fighting with the die-hard Immortals continued but political power had clearly been delivered to the mullahs.

Imperialists support Khomeini

The fall of the Shah and Bakhtiar was conditioned by the belief of the imperialist powers, particularly the American government and the CIA, that the monarchy and its loyalists could not win. The deluded Shah may still believe that he retains a measure of popular support and no doubt feels betrayed by his imperialist sponsors. But what is of paramount strategic importance for Jimmy Carter and Co is not the fate of the tinpot Pahlavi 'dynasty' but the preservation of a powerful Iranian buffer against the Soviet Union based on the imperialist-trained armed forces elite.

Thus the imperialists have rushed to endorse the new Khomeini/Bazargan regime. Britain

continued on page 4

Fascists attack Bloody Sunday demo



Ross Kenward



Ross Kenward

These photographs show fascist thugs assaulting the January 28 London demonstration called by Provisional Sinn Fein to mark the seventh anniversary of the Bloody Sunday massacre. As the 1500-strong march was assembling at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, well over a hundred supporters of the British Movement and National Front led a sudden onslaught on a section of the demonstration which included the Spartacist League contingent. Although fought off by demonstrators and then held at bay by police squads, the fascists later trailed alongside the march, harassing protesters with periodic charges and smoke bombs, and taunting them with Nazi-style salutes and cheers for the Ulster Volunteer Force. Thirty-six fascists were arrested, along with two demonstrators.

While these fascists were mainly lumpen youths out for a Sunday afternoon 'Paddy-bashing' session, their leadership had carefully chosen the Bloody Sunday march as the object of the attack in order to cash in on the 'public outrage' whipped up by the bourgeois press in the wake of the December and January IRA bombings in England. Alongside this anti-Republican offensive has been an increase in NF propaganda against the militant picketing tactics of workers on strike.

As the government/TUC inspired campaign to break the lorry drivers' stoppage got underway in earnest, NF leader John Tyndall was explaining to his members that: 'When we take over the reins of government, as one day we shall, the moment that mobsters try by physical intimidation to prevent British workers doing their job, those mobsters will find themselves in police cells so quickly they won't know what hit them' (*Guardian*, 22 January). Here unembellished is the real programme of fascism: smash the unions and atomise the working class.

Both the fascist attack and the stridency of Tyndall's pledge to gaol pickets show clearly that, contrary to the smug self-congratulatory mouthings of Anti Nazi League spokesmen, the National Front has not been crushed or demoralised. Neither the ANL Carnival of last September (when 80 thousand people celebrated life and love in Brixton while the NF marched through the East End), nor any of the other liberal gimmicks subsequently tried, have worked.

What is needed to halt the fascists for good, as we have insisted all along, is not throngs of people blowing pretty bubbles in the air, but workers defence squads based on the strength of the trade unions. ■

SL Iran meeting threatened

Flyposters advertising a February 16 Spartacist League public meeting on Iran at a central Birmingham pub provoked a variety of threats last month. A caller claiming to represent Column 88, a fascist para-military organisation, warned the publican by phone that his premises would be wrecked if the meeting took place. A second (anonymous) caller made similar threats. A spokesman for an Iranian Muslim group then called our Birmingham office, announcing that the meeting would be stopped at all costs and hinting darkly that 'thousands had died in Iran, and a few more in Britain wouldn't hurt'.

Undeterred by this three-pronged attack, the SL called for a defence bloc with the other left groups in Birmingham to defend the meeting. With the co-operation of the SWP, IMG and Workers Power (the WSL and I-CL were unresponsive), the meeting was successfully held at an alternative venue.

Application for membership in the SL

'If the IRA can't free the working class, who can?'

17th December 1978

To the Spartacist League, Birmingham

This is one letter I can truthfully say I never thought I would be writing. I also feel that anyone who knew me in Toronto or London would have held the same view. The following I hope will give some sort of explanation as to why I now feel I can make that commitment.

I first came in contact with the Spartacist League through Sean in Canada in December '74. The first public meeting I attended at which they intervened was on 14th February '75, it was held by 'Maoists'. The Spartacist intervention was met with a chorus of 'hissing and booing'. This I could not understand. The view I got from the left in Ireland was that, we are all fighting for the same thing so why can't we fight together. Then Sean intervened and I slowly began to sink down in my seat as the 'chorus' began again. I tried to pretend I was not with him, then someone behind us whispered 'we'll get you paddy'. To my relief one of the Canadian comrades came and asked us if we would like to leave before the meeting ended just to be on the safe side. To this day I don't know what the meeting was about, but I always think of it as the St Valentine's Day Massacre.

After that first meeting there were no more for me. This was not like attending public meetings in O'Connell Street or marching on anti-internment demonstrations. It was boring branch meetings and paper sales. Yet any of the Canadian comrades I met were convinced they had the programme that could make the revolution, almost to the point of arrogance. For personal reasons I did not want to know, so about a year and a half and two cities later we ended up going our (Sean and I) separate ways.

I went back to Dublin where I slowly got myself back together. I began to get to know myself and not just think of myself as one half of a partnership. Being separated I got a first hand view of what it's like being a woman in Ireland. I could not claim social assistance because I was married, but I could claim 'deserted wife's allowance' to which I replied that I was not deserted and was told that was all I was entitled to. The only job I could get after six weeks was in a Filter factory at £34.00 a week. Married women have a tax allowance of £5.00 a week and pay 37 pence tax in the pound over this, and in a country where contraception, abortion and divorce are illegal once you are married, you're always married.

I came back to England because I wanted to (unlike the previous occasion), and with an open mind. There were also many questions I needed answers for. If the IRA can't free the working class in Ireland who and what can? If women's groups can't win the fight for women's rights who or what can? Through the help of comrades in both Birmingham and London and with no feeling of pressure I have come to the point where I now feel confident that I can be of some help in building a revolutionary party although my knowledge is limited. I am in agreement with the programme and am willing to work under discipline of the ISL.

Forward to the Rebirth of the Fourth International.

[Denise S]

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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December productivity deal divides workforce

Defeat at Leyland

British Leyland workers suffered another defeat last month when threatened strike action over management's refusal to meet parity payments fizzled. BL had refused to hand over backdated parity payments promised in an agreement negotiated in December, but the half-hearted strike call issued by the Leyland Combine Committee of officials and senior stewards on February 2 was rejected by mass meetings at a majority of plants during the following week. The militant Longbridge workers, who chose to go it alone by striking on February 7, were thus isolated and returned to work demoralised after a week-long strike.

At the Longbridge mass meeting, less than 200 of the 19,000-strong workforce voted against the call for immediate strike action in defiance of the official February 12 strike date. And they struck with enthusiasm. The strike featured daily mass picketing by several hundred workers at the main gates, effectively squashing any attempts at scab-herding by the cops. The human barricade was supplemented by a barbed-wire barricade at the construction site of the new Austin Mini plant. The anger of the Longbridge workers, who stood to lose up to £10 a week and £140 in back payments, forced Communist Party convenor Derek Robinson -- an arch-bureaucrat whom BL chairman Michael Edwardes says he 'enjoys dealing with' -- into a short-lived display of verbal militancy in backing the strike.

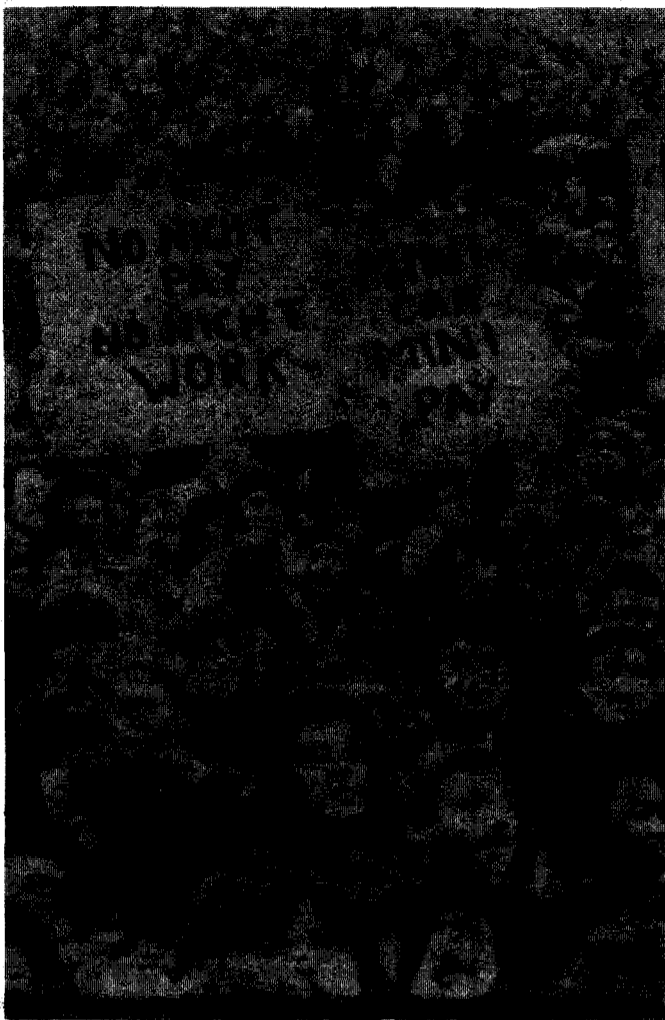
But it was Robinson and his cronies in the union bureaucracy who sabotaged the struggle. By setting the strike date for ten days after their call for an all-out walkout, the Combine Committee gave BL management, the government and Fleet Street ample time to wage a concerted campaign against the strike. While several plants besides Longbridge voted for strike action, including Drews Lane and SU Fuel Systems, most other BL plants voted against -- by a two-to-one majority after a secret ballot at the Cowley Assembly plant, and by overwhelming margins at Jaguar, Triumph and Rovers. So the strike was called off, and a few days later Robinson managed to cajole the Longbridge stewards' committee and then the membership into voting to return to work as well.

The December sellout

While the full-page newspaper adverts taken out by BL management which threatened 'closure of large chunks of BL' undoubtedly had some effect, the key reason for the defeat was the nature of the sellout deal foisted on Leyland workers this past December. More than one third of those who responded to the company-wide postal ballot voted against the December agreement, which not only accepted the government-imposed five per cent pay limit but gave union sanction to management's demand for seven thousand redundancies. In return for their agreement to this massive job-slashing, most BL workers were to receive payments of up to ten pounds a week in order to bring them up to parity with the higher-paid plants.

While the deal was touted as a straight 'jobs for parity' trade off, in fact the entire fraud was linked to a 'self-financing' productivity clause, which stated that a predetermined (and secret!) level of production had to be reached before management would pay out.

Management announced that it was withholding the payments at the end of January because of alleged low production levels. This shrewdly-calculated provocation took the union officialdom by surprise. They began bleating in protest at management's bad faith and snivelling that strikes outside BL, particularly the lorry drivers' dispute, were responsible for the production shortfall. Needless to say, these were



Longbridge mass meeting votes to strike

not the arguments needed to motivate strike action by the BL workforce!

The sellout parity scheme meant that the union leaders and management had thoroughly isolated the lower-paid Longbridge workers, now also targeted for layoffs as Edwardes looks to cut 20,000 more jobs, from the better-paid plants. The majority of car workers clearly had little material incentive to strike over the narrow issue of pay parity, since they stood to gain little or nothing anyway.

The whole BL workforce has a proven capacity for struggle and there is massive discontent with the five per cent settlement -- particularly since the Ford workers and just about everyone else have blown Phase Four to hell. But a strike limited to recovering £1.50 a week for Rover workers and nothing at all for Jaguar was clearly not capable of generating an enthusiastic response. Moreover, the workers obviously did not believe that a union leadership which had sold them down the river again and again was prepared to wage a winning struggle. So Longbridge went it alone for a week and in the end everyone lost ... except the job-slashing, union-bashing Leyland management.

WSL: champions of separate struggle

Socialist Press, organ of Cowley shop steward Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL), featured unusually sparse coverage of the abortive Leyland strike -- hardly surprising, since its line was to argue for 'the management package to be aborted and individual plant claims resubmitted to the management' (*Socialist Press*, 14 February). Leyland workers should throw out the rotten December deal lock, stock and barrel -- but not to replace it with localised plant-by-plant bargaining as the WSL argues.

The WSL's justification for a strategy of fragmenting what should be a common national struggle is that national agreements take bargaining power out of the hands of militant stew-

ards' committees in the plants and place it in the hands of appointed officials who are sure to sell out. Given the existing leadership of the unions, the bureaucrats nationally will of course mount no fight against management's attacks on the working class. But the response of Marxists to this situation must be to fight for national strike action under the control of democratically elected strike committees directly accountable to mass meetings, and to take up the fight to oust the bureaucrats and replace them with a revolutionary leadership of the labour movement. The WSL's policy of calling for a return to individual plant bargaining is a purely organisational response and represents a direct avoidance of the necessary struggle to throw out the Duffys and Evanses in the AUEW and TGWU.

Communists oppose any bargaining arrangement imposed by management against the will of the union membership, including their corporate bargaining policies, but we do *not* advocate the deliberate isolation of what should be common struggles against the same employer. The unified struggle of all Ford workers throughout the country was key to busting the five per cent in the strike last autumn. The Cowley parochialists of the WSL undoubtedly prefer isolation in their Oxfordshire bailiwick, but a massive company-wide shutdown to win a common agreement for all BL plants is what was -- and still is -- clearly necessary.

The 'rank and file' economists of *Workers Action*, however, manage to go the WSL one better. Unable to stomach even Thornett & Co's conservative localism, these timid creatures argued in their February 17-24 issue that the WSL policy of striking to throw out the December sellout was 'ultra-left'. Instead the strike should have remained limited to the narrow issue of the withheld parity payments -- ie the same strategy for defeat upheld by the bureaucrats.

Reopen the claim!

Militant workers throughout Leyland should have fought for a full national strike and sought to extend its aims to include reopening the claim and fighting for a massive, across-the-board wage increase and industry-wide parity at the highest level. Moreover, they should have sought to link the car workers' fight to that of the striking public sector workers and all other unions in a common offensive, by demanding an emergency TUC congress to launch a general strike to smash all wage restraints and bury the Labour government's anti-union austerity policies.

The wheeling and dealing around productivity schemes, redundancies and closures must be rejected: workers must not take responsibility for the low profitability of British Leyland, one of the sickest corporations in the sick British capitalist economy. Instead militants must respond to all threats of closure and redundancies by occupying the plants involved and fighting for work sharing on full pay.

The wake of the February defeat has already seen a wave of provocations by management. The suspension of Longbridge workers in an 'anti-absenteeism' campaign and the layoff threats to the Range Rover final line at Rover Solihull have both been met with strike action by workers in the departments concerned.

The will to fight the intimidation and speed-up exists, but it must be harnessed in a company-wide strike to drive back the management offensive, scrap the current agreement and give all Leyland workers a massive wage increase and a shorter working week. And that requires a fight for a new union leadership, based on a programme of intransigent revolutionary class struggle. ■

Iran...

(Continued from page 1)

recognised the government on February 13. David Owen told reporters in Kuwait that Britain was supporting Bazargan and Khomeini because 'Iran had made it', and went on to praise the 'unifying factor of the Moslem faith'. The black front man for the US State Department, Andrew Young, met with emissaries from the ayatollah shortly before the latter's seizure of power, and remarked to newsmen that 'Khomeini will be somewhat of a saint when we get over the panic' (*New York Times*, 8 February). The US was in constant touch with the Iranian military through the intermediary of NATO, and after the ayatollah had taken power Carter announced that the US was set to work with the new Iranian regime.

Khomeini may well be canonised by the imperialists because he has managed to save an otherwise lost cause. He has supplanted the Shah's despised regime with a more popular government based on the military, a regime which will if possible be even more anti-communist than its predecessor. The ayatollah has repeatedly promised to maintain the Shah's ban on the 'anti-patriotic' pro-Moscow Tudeh Party. He reportedly told a West German diplomat in early February: 'We suffer from the same enemy as you do, the Communists. The Communists divided Germany, and they want to divide Iran' (*Newsweek*, 26 February).

Khomeini underlined his desire to seek a rapprochement with US imperialism on February 14 when he sent his deputy, Ibrahim Yazdi, with Islamic gunmen to the US embassy in Teheran to rescue the American ambassador from enraged crowds. Already Bazargan has promised that oil exports will be restarted as soon as possible, including to the US. And General Qarani, a former officer of the Shah's army who is Khomeini's new top military chief, stated on February 20 that 'many hundreds' of American military experts would soon be allowed to return to Iran to help the new army use its sophisticated US-built weaponry.

Mopping up

The chief problem now facing Khomeini and the mullahs is the consolidation of their rule. After having neutralised the overwhelming mass of the army, the new regime has moved to secure its hold over the military by a purge and selective executions of the Shah's top commanders. At the same time, Khomeini is seeking to consolidate a monopoly of armed might for the rest of the regular army. In a February 13 television address he demanded that all weapons be surrendered to the mosque. He went on to demand that the 3½ million striking workers, including the 60,000 oil workers whose strike action was so key in bringing the Shah to his knees, return to work on February 17. Khomeini warned that any who refused would be branded 'saboteurs' and 'counter-revolutionaries' and dealt with accordingly.

Khomeini knows only too well that the oil workers in particular are not wedded to his reactionary Islamic ideology, but are influenced by left-wing organisations, reportedly including the Tudeh Party. According to the *Middle East Economic Survey* (19 February), fifty of the sixty members of the oil workers' strike committee are linked to leftist groups, and a representative of the ayatollah on the committee has resigned in protest against its leftist bias.

The ayatollah also knows that many of the rifles, mortars, grenades and machine guns circulating in Teheran are in the possession of guerrilla organisations like the 'Marxist-Leninist' Fedayeen-e-Khalq. Despite the fact that Fedayeen leaders have pledged to co-operate with the mullahs 'to co-ordinate and supervise the use of confiscated arms', many of the guerrillas are clearly not about to peacefully hand their weapons into the nearest mosque.

Behind Khomeini's appeal to Islamic duty is an open threat to unleash the army against the Fedayeen, other leftists, striking workers, struggling national minorities and all unreliable armed civilians. Bazargan has ordered all deserters to report for duty. Newly appointed deputy premier Amir Entezam told a BBC interviewer that the troops would be used to crush the urban guerrillas if necessary. In a habitual turn of phrase the ayatollah himself warned that he would 'cut off the hands of traitors at work, of those who want to terrorise, massacre and destroy' (UPI dispatch, 13 February). A week later

he called on the security forces to clamp down on the left and get back to protecting the country, and added that he would crush 'bandits and unlawful elements' with the same force he used to oust the Shah.

Despite the difficulties inherent in trying to order the same troops who only a few days before had passed out the weapons to the population to collect them again by force, Khomeini's government has thus far succeeded in suppressing most leftist opposition to the new order. There have been demonstrations in Teheran protesting against the secrecy of Khomeini's Islamic trials of Savak agents and generals, and denouncing the composition of the new armed forces leadership. The Fedayeen have also demonstrated against censorship on the mullah-controlled 'voice of the revolution' radio



The masses are armed. But not for long, says the ayatollah

station and called for the formation of a 'people's army'. But many weapons have been turned into the mosques, and most of the strikers, including the bulk of the oil workers, reportedly returned to work when ordered by Khomeini.

The 'Marxist-Leninist' guerrillas may be 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 now that he is in power. They have chanted 'Allah Akhbar' ('God is great') and 'Khuda, Koran, Khomeini' (God, the Koran, Khomeini) in unison with the Muslim opposition for too long to sing a different tune now and expect the masses to follow.

Moreover, their tune hasn't changed very much at all. 5000 Fedayeen supporters demonstrating in Teheran on February 16 in favour of a 'people's army' carried a large portrait of Khomeini at the head of the demonstration (*Le Monde*, 18 February). Far from opposing the ayatollah and calling for his overthrow by the workers, the Fedayeen merely seek to pressure him into forming a more 'progressive' government including their own representatives.

From the Shah to the mullahs

How is it that Khomeini's Muslim fundamentalism and demagogic populism have acquired such a hold over the Iranian masses? The Shah collided with the mullahs in the course of his attempt to transform Iran into a sub-imperialist power. Like other bonapartist 'modernising' rulers in the Near and Middle East he attempted to impose state control over religious offices and revenues. He also attempted to emulate a few of the more cosmetic secularising reforms carried out in a much more serious manner in the 1920s by the Turkish bourgeois nationalist Kemal Ataturk.

But the Shah's 'modernisation' campaign was more akin to the abortive efforts of the nineteenth century Ottoman sultans than to anything done by Ataturk. In their fight to maintain their privileged caste position and religious authority the mullahs could exploit the manifold contradictions of the so-called 'White Revolution': the uneven economic development which brought inflation that ground down the merchants of the bazaar, a stronghold of Muslim traditionalism; the agrarian 'reform' which took land from the *ulema* but which left the mass of peasants just as destitute as before; and the token legal rights for women which enraged de-

vout Muslims but actually benefited only a tiny number of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women.

Khomeini and the mullahs were able to carry the vast majority of the Iranian people behind them not simply because of the social backwardness of much of Iranian society, but because of the historic inability of the left to provide revolutionary leadership in the struggle against the Shah. The Tudeh Party betrayed the proletarian upsurge of the 1940s, breaking the 1946 oil workers strike in the service of the Soviet bureaucracy's diplomatic manoeuvres. In the early 1960s, when the USSR began to sell arms to and buy natural gas from the Shah, the Tudeh became apologists for the regime, advocating the 'reform' rather than the overthrow of the autocracy.

A whole generation of youth, repulsed by this betrayal, turned to Maoism. But they in turn became cynical apologists for Stalinist 'state to state' relations when Peking consummated its alliance with the Shah in 1961. The guerrillaists, who had written off the Iranian proletariat as hopelessly terrorised and corrupted, then made a 'turn' to the working class -- on the basis of class-collaborationist 'anti-imperialism'. And this led them straight into the arms of Khomeini.

Victory will certainly usher in a process of political fissioning among the forces following the ayatollah. His religious support ranges from pious technocrats like Bazargan to rich merchants of the bazaar to fanatical theology students to 'Islamic-socialist' demagogues. Moreover, Khomeini's 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.

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, and crack down upon the leftists among them.

Iran's phoney February

There were incidents in the last month which 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 rushed to the mosques to thank Allah. There are no mass democratic institutions of incipient dual power and no revolutionaries to fight for a proletarian programme within them.

Iran's February and October 1917 are still to come. Perhaps the leading cadre of the future Iranian revolution will learn its crucial

The ayatollah's sword

Khomeini's call for security forces to return to their posts, broadcast on Teheran radio on February 20:

'In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. At this sensitive juncture, when hooligans, under deceptive names, are engaged in hatching plots against the Islamic revolution and there is the threat of a return of foreigners, thanks to these elements, in order to plunder the country, it is necessary for the national security forces to return to their posts immediately and co-operate with the security forces to safeguard the city and sensitive points connected with it.

'These people, who have embarked on destruction and anti-Islamic and anti-humane acts, who are trying to occupy sensitive positions in favour of foreigners, should bear in mind that their strength is no greater than the satanic strength of the Shah and his supporters. If they refuse to join the nation and to act rationally, then matters will be clear to the brave Iranian nation and Teheran. I shall not tolerate these gross acts. All sections, under whatever names, must continue their activities under the Islamic flag. Anything else would be an uprising against the Islamic revolutionary government, the punishment for which under the Islamic Constitution is quite clear. I greatly hope that all sections will behave peacefully and with decency. I will not allow anarchy, however.'

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 with the 'democratic' camouflage of bonapartist 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 and their apologists.

The powerful Iranian proletariat could be the vanguard of socialist revolution throughout the entire Middle East, sweeping aside all the shahs, sheikhs 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!

The Shah's phoney White Revolution could not solve the democratic tasks of the Iranian revolution; nor can they be solved under Khomeini's reactionary Islamic 'republic'. What is needed is a party which can fight for the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution.

Struggle for a constituent assembly? Yes, but fight for one that is both secular and sovereign, not a creature of the theocratic state. And that means a fight against the mullahs, a struggle for proletarian power! Fight for land reform? Yes, but not to redress the cosmetic reforms hated by the mullahs. We call for land to the tiller in the context of a struggle against the Islamic clergy who have been among the largest holders of land in Iran!

Khomeini and his foreign minister, Karim Sanjabi, responded to reports of separatist struggles among Iran's Kurdish minority by denouncing 'armed subversion'. In contrast, we demand the unconditional right of self-determination for the oppressed minority nations. No to the Islamic veil, the cloak of women's oppression which the mullahs seek to reimpose -- full legal rights for women! For the complete separation of mosque and state -- full democratic rights for religious and national minorities, including the 'heretical' Bahais, already victims of chauvinist attack by Khomeini supporters.

People's justice for Savak and the army generals! Teheran has many lampposts and even more victims of Savak torture and military blood-letting. When the mullahs, in an effort to save as many of the secret police and generals as possible for their own use, say that the tribunals of people's justice must give way to an Islamic court, we say not the 'just rule of Islam' but the rule of the proletariat!

The workers in their embryonic trade unions, their factory and strike committees must break completely from the leadership of the reactionary mullahs. Workers in many large Teheran factories are reportedly demanding the right to elect their own managers as a condition for returning to work. When Bazargan went to the oil workers in the name of Khomeini and Allah in January to ask them to ease up on their strike, he said that he found the workers were 'not so religious'. The centralisation of the various strike and factory committees into soviet-type bodies could provide the basis for dual power against the ayatollah's theocracy. Yet the working class has continued for the most part to follow Khomeini's lead, thanks to betrayers like the Tudeh Party, which has come out in full support of the new government.

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 proletariat takes the offensive away from the mullahs and the *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 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 October.

-- adapted from Workers Vanguard no 225, 16 February 1979

Workers Power covers for Khomeini

The Spartacist tendency has earned the hatred of Muslim fundamentalists and pseudo-Marxists throughout the world for our intransigent opposition to the reactionary religious leadership of the Iranian opposition, encapsulated in our slogan 'Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs!' Muslim fanatics and Iranian Maoist-Stalinists have tried to break up our public meetings on Iran in several countries. In Britain, they have joined with Iranian fake-Trotskyists around the Committee Against Repression in Iran, the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Socialist Workers Party to physically exclude us from anti-Shah demonstrations.

The fake-lefts have filled their publications with rosy-sounding lies about the character and social programme of the mullahs. Today, as their beloved Ayatollah Khomeini prepares a bloodbath for the Iranian left at the hands of the ex-Imperial army, these opportunists' craven support for the forces of the mosque looks pretty sick.

By comparison the position of the centrist Workers Power (WP) group might appear rather good. WP has protested the exclusion of the SL from several demonstrations. The January issue of its newspaper warned that Khomeini might 'sanctify a new military dictatorship' and 'use the petty bourgeoisie and lumpenproletariat in fascist terror squads against the workers'. A major article in the February *Workers Power* carried headlines warning 'Beware of the Religious Leaders' and 'No democracy for workers in Khomeini's proposed State'. At first glance this organisation might seem to be a refreshing change from the IMG et al.

Not so. WP cannot fathom the idea of standing



Pro-Khomeini 'anti-imperialists' guard US imperialist ambassador Sullivan

hard against any 'mass movement', even one with a thoroughly reactionary leadership and programme like that of the mullahs. While on one page the February *WP* says 'No to an Islamic Republic', on the next it tries to justify a policy of supporting the movement which is fighting for such a 'republic' in a lengthy polemic against the position of the Spartacist tendency.

WP clamours that our position on Iran is 'sectarian', 'absurd and shameful', 'reactionary', 'as bad if not worse' than the IMG's, and even akin to that of 'State Department Socialists'. In a farrago of apparently conscious lies and slanders, WP twists our positions into a handy sectarian strawman, and then constructs a case for supporting Khomeini against the Shah.

The axis of its attack is contained in the following passage:

'[The Spartacists] wish to *abstain* from support for the mass struggle against the Shah. When they say "Down with the Shah!" they in fact include a proviso -- only if it is the workers led by communists who do it. They oppose absolutely

any military co-operation with the non-proletarian oppositionists. This position would mean abstention from the demonstrations, from the confrontations with the troops... In the event of an uprising and barricade fighting between the army and the people it would again mean abstention.' (*WP* no 4, February 1979)

WP then goes on to claim that we are guilty of 'whitewashing the Shah' because we claim that an Islamic Republic could be even worse than the rule of the Shah for the Iranian workers and peasants, the oppressed nationalities and women.

United front for what?

WP's rendition of what are supposed to be our positions is a series of gross distortions and falsehoods. Of course we have never 'absolutely opposed any military co-operation' with non-proletarian oppositionists. The key question is *which* 'non-proletarian oppositionists' and under what circumstances.

Marxists always seek to forge an alliance with the non-proletarian oppressed -- poor peasants, oppressed minorities etc -- under the leadership of the working class. Moreover, in a struggle against imperialism we would often be ready and anxious to further the proletarian cause by forming a temporary fighting alliance with bourgeois forces which are for whatever reason engaged in combat against the foreign oppressor. And we could even form a military bloc with bourgeois-democratic forces against a movement or a government of fascist or bonapartist reaction, while maintaining our complete organisational and programmatic independence.

But none of these situations apply to the mullahs' power struggle against the Shah. WP argues for an 'anti-imperialist military united front' with the *ulema* against the Shah. But where and how have the mullahs fought imperialism? Khomeini is not some bourgeois nationalist fighting for national independence: a Chiang Kai-shek fighting the imperialists and their warlord and feudalist allies, or a Kemal Ataturk fighting for the national consolidation of Turkey.

Moreover, WP to the contrary, Iran is not simply a semi-colony of the US and Britain -- it has played a sub-imperialist role in its own right in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region. And the Shah was not a simple, flat 'agent of American and British imperialism'. He was an Iranian *ally* of the imperialist powers, one who sought to develop capitalism in Iran, just as the Saudi oil sheikhs and Egypt's Sadat seek to develop their own native capital and are weak allies, not simple puppets, of the imperialists.

Many of the toiling masses who were pulled behind the struggle of the *ulema* in Iran were undoubtedly animated by hostility to American and British imperialism, which bolstered the Shah's rule, trained the hated Imperial army and siphoned off imperialist superprofits from the oil industry. But Khomeini and the mullahs were engaged in a power struggle against an existing *Persian* despot -- and their social programme was in no fundamental sense more progressive than that of the Shah.

In Iran, a revolutionary organisation -- in accordance with its size, its authority *and* its overall policy of unflinching hostility to the *ulema* -- might still have sought opportunities for specific, limited blocs with sections of the Muslim-led opposition as part of its fight to split the plebeian masses from the Khomeini leadership. Revolutionaries might have sought joint action to demand the release of certain political prisoners or the smashing of Savak, for example, or to stop troops rampaging in the workers' and plebeian quarters.

The accompanying article explains how we would have fought alongside the mullah-led forces in the event of a full-scale civil war against an intact monarchist officer corps. And we would certainly have sought to intervene with all our energies in such proletarian struggles as the oil workers' strikes, fighting for our programme in the strike committees and seeking

continued on page 7

USec reformist Joseph Hansen dies

Joseph Hansen, in recent years the main international spokesman and polemicist for the reformist-American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), died in New York on January 18.

Hansen was born in 1910 in a small Mormon Utah town. He attended college in Salt Lake City, where in 1934 he was recruited to Trotskyism, the SWP and the Abern clique by Earle Birney, a Burnhamite and later a well-known Canadian poet. Hansen's sojourn among the Abernites later became the subject of his finest polemic, when in March 1940 he disposed once and for all of the claim that there was no 'Abern clique' by the simple expedient of publishing excerpts from some 40 confidential Abernite letters written to him in 1936-37. (This document was republished as part of an SWP *Education for Socialists* pamphlet in September 1972.)

Despite his adherence to Marxism, Hansen exhibited traces of the puritanical social values of the Mormon milieu. In 1954 he precipitated a heated and silly internal debate (see SWP *Internal Bulletin* no A-23, October 1954) over the 'cosmetics controversy' by authoring, under the pseudonym Jack Bustelo, a *Militant* article which came out against the use of cosmetics in favor of 'moral beauty' and the well-scrubbed pioneer-woman look. His pamphlet entitled 'Too Many Babies?' (undated [1960?]) defended fertility against 'population explosion' theorists with a smugness which must make the present-day SWP, oh-so-sensitive to questions of ecology, squirm:

'What can be done to stop babies from making any further inroads on mankind? Some of the best minds in the capitalist world are working around the clock on this fateful problem....'

The obituary by George Novack (*Intercontinental Press*, 29 January) particularly salutes Hansen for being 'among the first' in the SWP to recognize that the Red Army had overturned capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe following World War II. This is true. And it was no abstract 'theoretical' question. When the American Trotskyists were made to confront the issue of post-war Stalinism, they began to get a division (later to become the Cochran-Clarke split, which solidarized with Michel Pablo in Europe) in the top leadership. On the one side were the native revisionists -- Clarke, Bartell, Novack, Breitman, Hansen -- intrigued by the idea that workers states could be created without a proletarian Trotskyist party. On the other side were Cannon and John G Wright, who had no counter-theory except stand-pat, sterile 'orthodoxy'. Farrell Dobbs, chief party administrator, took an above-the-battle, apolitical posture.

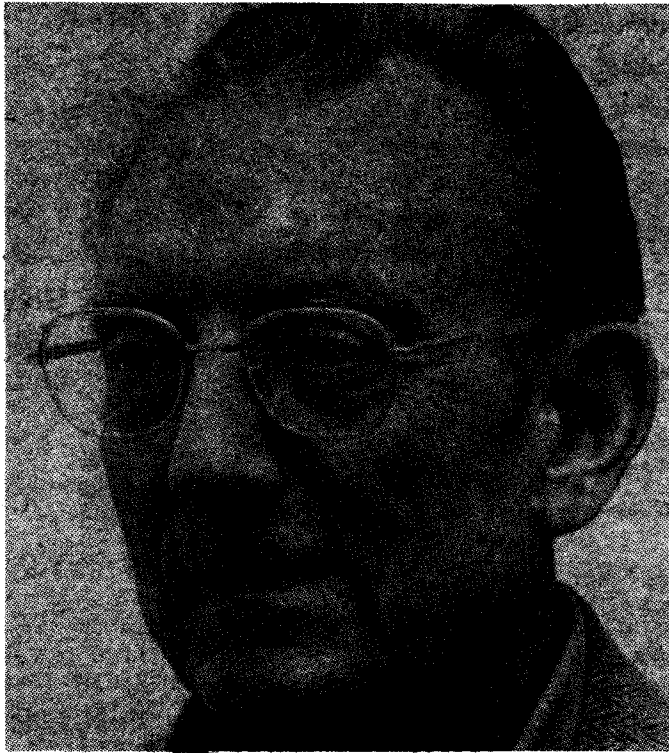
After the Third World Congress (where some solid links to Pablo were established) in 1951, the American revisionist current underwent internal division. Cannon effected a bloc on organizational grounds with the Dobbs forces and managed to hold the line. Later, at the May 1953 SWP Plenum, Cannon noted:

'During the course of the past year, I had serious doubts of the ability of the SWP to survive. At one time -- I will frankly admit to you here for the first time -- I thought that our twenty-five-year effort, compounded on all the previous experience and work of ourselves and others, had ended in catastrophic failure; and that, once again, a small handful would have to pick up the pieces, and start all over again to build the new cadre of another party on the old foundations.' (*Speeches to the Party*)

Joseph Hansen was one of those who caused Cannon to wonder if it was all over.

It was not over quite yet. The SWP clung to orthodoxy. It was not until the period 1961-63 -- when the same question of seeking substitutes for the proletarian vanguard was posed over Cuba -- that it became clear that a 'small handful' (the Spartacist tendency) would have to build 'another party on the old foundations'. By patching together an SWP majority and retreating from the international fight, Cannon opened the road to the SWP's decisive capitulation to Pabloism over Cuba.

Here again, Hansen the literary technician took the lead. His real talent -- manifestly useful for a party of mounting revisionism -- was the ability to propound a new line in fragments strewn through many paragraphs, punctuated with saving clauses and orthodox disclaimers.



Joseph Hansen

And Hansen knew just where to find justifications for the SWP's infatuation with the Castro regime: he went straight to the Communist International's 4th Congress (1922) discussion on the 'workers and farmers government' slogan. The confused formulations and speculations there about a 'workers and farmers government' not being equivalent to the dictatorship of the proletariat have been seized upon by numerous latter-day opportunists (Hal Draper, among others). Add to this Trotsky's famous phrase about the petty-bourgeois parties possibly going 'further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie' and you have Hansen's July 1960 document, 'The Character of the New Cuban Government'.

Through most of the 1960s, Hansen was an enthusiastic bystander applauding and theorizing for guerrillaism -- a tactic which, divorced from a situation of civil war, is an anti-proletarian strategy appropriate to the petty bourgeoisie and to the remote, fully rural peasantry. Only when empiricism -- to which Hansen was wedded -- showed guerrillaism to be disastrous did Hansen move into his most important role, as principal theoretician for the increasingly legalistic SWP and its international co-thinkers in the right wing of the United Secretariat (USec).

The USec was formed by the 1963 reunification of the SWP with the European Pabloists. By smashing opposition to the merger in Latin America, Western Europe and Asia and finally by building a USec section in England itself, Hansen earned the undying (and ultimately psychotic) enmity of Gerry Healy, spokesman for the ostensibly anti-Pabloist International Committee. Hence the full flowering of Healyite paranoia locked onto Hansen as the main target of a campaign to smear SWP leaders as tools of the Stalinist and capitalist secret police.

In 1937 Hansen had gone to Mexico to serve as Trotsky's leading secretary. His highly confidential work in this period, and his role as a main contact with the bourgeois authorities in the investigation of Trotsky's assassination by a Stalinist agent in 1940 -- testimony to the position of trust Hansen had won in the Trotskyist movement -- became the excuse for a loathsome Healyite campaign to slander Hansen as an 'accomplice' to the assassination and an agent of the Stalinist GPU, FBI etc.

The Spartacist tendency actively defended Hansen against the slander campaign, which mimicked the discredited Stalinist chorus that Trotsky had been murdered by one of his own people. In addition to signing the statements prepared by the SWP, we picketed Healyite 'public' meetings, demanding, 'Who Gave Healy His Security Clearance?' (see 'Joe Hansen Is an Honest Revisionist', *Workers Vanguard* no 141, 21 January 1977).

Hansen had no trouble defending himself against Healy's ludicrous charges. In the process, he showed why he had a reputation as a

painstaking man. Years ago, Spartacist spokesman James Robertson told Healy that in the Shachtmanite organization (of which Robertson was once a member) there was a standard jibe about Hansen: any member of the SWP Political Committee can do a hatchet job on an opponent, but when a particularly dirty job is required, all eyes turn as one to Joe Hansen. It was not until Hansen published his reply to Healy's slander campaign (see SWP *Education for Socialists* pamphlet, 'Healy's Big Lie', December 1976) that we learned of a written version of the jibe: Hansen found it in an article which appeared in the Shachtmanite press in 1953.

Hansen was an able polemicist against the SWP's international competitors, both within and outside the USec. A particular specialty of his was seeking to defuse the Spartacist tendency's political attacks while carefully choosing as foils the Healyites, whose sectarianism, organizational atrocities and laughable theoretical bankruptcy made them the SWP's spokesman of choice for ostensible anti-Pabloism. Hansen's recent book, *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* (1978) is a sterling example of a polemic directed covertly against the Spartacist tendency. Yet he also knew how to acknowledge the existence of the Spartacist League when it suited him, as in the introduction to the SWP's 1966 pamphlet, 'Healy "Reconstructs" the Fourth International'.

Considering his wretched political line and the general sliminess of Jack Barnes' SWP, Hansen was a half-decent opponent. Because we had never known him to falsify a quotation, we assumed he probably was not responsible when *Intercontinental Press* (13 January 1975) falsified the translation of a key phrase in a statement by the SWP's Argentine cothinkers which had come under attack by the USec majority.

And Hansen was smart. He accepted the press of the Spartacist League as an unimpeachable source of accurate information about the 'sectarian' far left. It was probably no accident that when Tim Wohlforth told the inside story of his dominion over and purge from the American Healyite organization, Hansen waited for us to authenticate the document (see 'Wohlforth Terminated', *WV* no 61, 31 January 1975) before serializing it in *Intercontinental Press*.

Even before our tendency was in programmatic opposition in the SWP, the cadres who were to become the founders of the Spartacist League found themselves counterposed to Hansen over their formation of an independent youth organization. But Comrade Robertson remembers Hansen as 'personally a good guy to work with' -- fair, reasonable, not a confrontationist, always willing to try and coopt you.

Joseph Hansen was a philistine, a hard-working political guy and an authentic revisionist.

-- adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 224, 2 February 1979

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Speaker: James Robertson

International Executive Committee,
international Spartacist tendency

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Workers Power...

(Continued from page 5)

to win the workers away from their reformist and religious misleaders.

But WP wanted to be *part* of the mullah-led movement, to seek to change it from within. They wanted to be with the masses on every demonstration of the opposition, presumably including those million-strong protests in Teheran calling for the imposition of an Islamic republic. To justify its call for a united front with the *ulema*, WP must pretend against all evidence that the central goals of the mullah-led movement overlapped with the programme of communists:

'Its central and most deeply felt immediate demands, the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty, the smashing of SAVAK, the release of all political prisoners, free elections and freedom of political parties, the nationalisation of British and American monopolies are national-revolutionary and bourgeois-democratic demands that the proletariat must support.' (WP no 3, January 1979)

But these were *not* the central demands of the mullah-led protests -- occasional Delphic utterances from the ayatollah's Parisian garden notwithstanding. Of WP's list only the call for the overthrow of the Shah was central to the religious protests. And this tells us precisely nothing about the character of the opposition and its leadership except that they were ... against the Shah.

WP conveniently ignores the fact that the attacks on 'usurious' banks began as a clerical-reactionary campaign against banks controlled by members of the Bahai sect, the 'Jews' of Iran who were central to financial institutions under the Shah. The vast demonstrations of December and January were brought together under such 'bourgeois-democratic' and 'national-revolutionary' slogans as 'Long live Khomeini', 'For an Islamic republic', 'God is great' and 'God, Khomeini, Koran -- that is our national motto'.

For all its extensive quotations from *Le Monde* and the *Economist* (presumably not 'chauvinist' bourgeois journals, unlike the American papers WP baits us for quoting), WP fails to mention that Iranian leftists who have attempted to unite with Khomeini have regularly been told to roll up their red banners and shut up. More and more, they have simply been beaten up, in the best clerical-fascist manner, by the mullahs' warriors of Islam.

WP insists that it would 'march alongside' the religious opposition and 'participate' in the anti-Shah actions while somehow raising 'clear independent slogans' and never hiding the fact that the 'positive goals' of the mullahs are not and cannot be those of the working class. But these positive goals are not some side issue. The mullahs are not a bunch of peripheral religious nuts who now and again slip out a few pictures of an exiled cult figure. They have been the shock troops of Khomeini's drive to power, and they have defined the programme and for the most part controlled the mass anti-Shah movement. When they beat up leftists, they were not being sectarian; they were showing the utterly reactionary, anti-communist and anti-democratic character of their movement.

Would WP have wanted a united front with the 'anti-capitalist' rhetoricians of Mussolini's march on Rome? What about the Muslim mass movement which ousted Pakistan's secular despot, Ali Bhutto, and brought to power the Islamic despot General Zia? Would WP have sought to unite with that? And how about a movement in Chile led by Catholic bishops, centred on the slogan 'Down with Pinochet! God and the Pope are our salvation!?'?

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Concordat...

(Continued from page 8)

an enormous upsurge in working class militancy which might split the Labour Party, accelerate greatly the tempo of class struggle and open enormous possibilities for the growth of a revolutionary party.

The bourgeoisie also has another solution in reserve: fascism. The continuous all-sided decline of British capitalism has created a fertile culture medium for the growth of fascist organisations. The petty bourgeoisie is being increasingly driven to desperation by a combination of accelerating inflation and unemployment, worsening social conditions, and seemingly permanent disruption of the economy by striking workers shackled with a leadership utterly uninterested in and incapable of struggle for proletarian state power.

Britain today is not Italy of 1921 nor the Weimar Republic of 1928-32 -- nor are the closet Hitler-worshippers of John Tyndall's National Front nearly as effective as the nativist

The sorry fact is that WP knows what the mullahs stand for. The February *Workers Power* admits that Khomeini 'may well' (and some mullahs 'undoubtedly do') want to restore clerical lands and the veil, expel foreign workers and oppress national minorities. However, it immediately adds, 'reservations do have to be made': after all, 'Shi'ia Islam explicitly allows reinterpretation by the ulemas of the canonical teachings of Islam! Wonderful -- the Holy Roman Catholic Church too allows its Princes to reinterpret the New Testament.

Perhaps Khomeini did oppose the Shah's reform of divorce laws -- but didn't he also, in the words of WP, 'tell a visiting delegation of women that he would not bring back polygamy: "One wife is enough" he remarked'. Women might be stoned in the holy city of Qom for not wearing the veil -- but, sweet reassurance, Khomeini's movement is not 'explicitly [!] for the return of women to the seclusion of the home and their submission to barbaric punishments'. But even that matters little, because for WP the 'recrudescence of veil wearing' is 'itself an act of defiance against the Shah's regulation outlawing it'!

WP even searches high and low for a quotation to buttress Khomeini's occasional 'democratic' pretensions:

'The reality of the Religious Opposition leaders is at variance with the Carter/Owen picture of them as reactionary fanatics who want to take Iran back to the seventh century. Khomeini insists that "I have always called strongly for economic and social development in my country" and espouses what he calls "the principles of democracy and freedom". By this he appears to mean a republic based on universal suffrage and with freedom for political parties.' (WP no 3, January 1979)

What about Khomeini's statements about never allowing the Tudeh Party to function legally, or about 'cutting off the hands' of non-Islamic 'infidels'? Why doesn't WP quote these for its readers? Because it is not fundamentally interested in telling the truth, but rather in doing a shoddy publicity agent's cover-up job for the ayatollah.

Here in Britain, Workers Power could remain mired in its centrist confusion, but in Iran reality would soon have caught up with the group. When the mullahs refused to countenance WP's proposed united front and threw them off the religious demonstrations, WP could either capitulate like the Fedayeen and carry portraits of Khomeini instead of red banners, or else be left standing on the pavement, perhaps a bit bloodied for the experience. Or they could adopt the necessary *independent* stance designed to split the working class and other oppressed layers from the mullahs.

To take the latter course however, WP would have to break fundamentally from its lesser-evil methodology and its endless 'united front' rationalisations for opportunism and capitulation. Workers Power militants must recognise that an inconsistent left posture -- which never goes far enough however to cause WP to be entirely disowned by the chummy British family of fake-Trotskyism -- combined with a specious and dishonest attitude to political struggle, will never build a Trotskyist vanguard party. The Leninist programme of the international Spartacist tendency and our revolutionary determination and honesty are the weapons that can defeat opportunism and reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

Italian and German fascists. But the longer the old bourgeois solutions are tried and found wanting, the more fascism will become a real danger for the British working class.

For a general strike!

British workers acutely need a new revolutionary leadership to show a way out of the country's endemic crisis and decay by fighting for a workers government and a planned socialist economy. Today the union movement could score a major victory by generalising and centralising the industrial upsurge through launching a general strike.

Stop the stalling -- bring out the miners, power workers and all the rest! Delegates must be elected afresh by mass meetings to a reconvened emergency national congress of the TUC to launch a general strike and elect a national strike committee to run it. The strike must not only demand huge wage rises for all workers and the scrapping of the Concordat and all wage controls, but also a sliding scale of wages, restoration of the cuts in social services and work sharing with no loss in pay.

Locally, strike committees responsible to and recallable by regular mass meetings must control the day-to-day running of the strike. Initially these committees could be based on already existing stewards' committees, but every effort should be made to broaden the strike bodies into councils of action capable of drawing in wider layers of the working population.

'A general strike!', one can hear the bureaucrats and their left hangers-on wail: 'But that could bring down Labour and let the Tories in!' However the working class has no interest in saving a strikebreaking, wage-cutting Labour government which is anxious only to show that it is better at keeping the unions in check than are the Tories.

The melange of fake-Trotskyists running from the Militant group to the Workers Socialist League try to justify continued support to Labour in the current situation by explicit recourse to that stock argument of political cowards and cretins: Labour is a 'lesser evil' than the Tories. But Marxists can never orient their politics by such a bankrupt opportunist methodology.

In 1974, critical electoral support to Labour in the context of Heath's anti-union offensive could have been a valuable tactic for Marxists, allowing them to draw an elementary class line between the workers movement and the direct political representatives of capital, and subsequently to reap the fruits of working class disaffection with Labour's betrayals in office. However today the question is how to deal a decisive blow to Labour's attacks and move forward to new victories. With revulsion against the Labour government widespread, Marxists must look for opportunities to split sections of militant workers away from Labour to a revolutionary programme through hard, intransigent opposition to the Callaghan government, including in elections. No vote to the Labour traitors!

Under pressure from its angry membership, sections of the NUPE leadership have lately been making noises about withholding support from Labour candidates in forthcoming by-elections and this year's general election unless they agree to support the union's struggle. Good as far as it goes. But the betrayals of Labour extend far beyond its refusal to pay the public sector pay claim, and the alternative cannot be a turn to apolitical syndicalism.

If the NUPE leaders were really serious about providing an alternative to the traitors of the Labour government -- which they manifestly are not -- then they would run trade union candidates *against* Labour. Such candidates could represent a genuine break, however partial, from the current class-collaborationism of the Labour/union bureaucracy in the direction of class struggle. Under such circumstances, revolutionaries could give them critical support, while fighting for union-sponsored candidates to run on a full programme of revolutionary class struggle.

The government the working class needs is not the one of Callaghan, Foot and Benn in Westminster but a workers government to expropriate the capitalist class. The road out of Britain's current economic mess is not austerity measures which throw the cost of capitalism's crisis onto the backs of the working class, but a couple of socialist five-year plans to rebuild industrial plant, sharply increase labour productivity and overcome the decades-long capitalist rot gnawing away at the fibre of British society. And that requires a Soviet Britain in a Socialist United States of Europe. ■

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Smash the Concordat through a general strike!

The Labour government's Phase Four is no more, killed by the most serious strike wave to sweep Britain since the miners confronted and brought down the Heath government in the winter of 1973-74. But, like the royalists of old who mourned the death of one king by hailing the ascension of another, the union bureaucrats are now busy cheering 'Phase Four is dead! Long live Phase Five!'

Their name for the latest class-collaborationist pact with the Callaghan Cabinet is the Concordat. It pledges to reduce wage increases, throw away the right to strike in certain sectors and curb militant picketing. Its aim is to help derail the current industrial upsurge, provide an electoral lifeline to Labour and pave the way for more years of wage control.

The working class should throttle this creature before it can venture out of the cradle. And the union movement is today exceptionally well placed to do so. Thousands of local government strikers are still on the streets, and the coal miners, power workers, railwaymen, steel workers and building workers -- not to mention the civil servants, teachers and many more -- are still poised for industrial action over their claims.

Here is a powerful basis for a common offensive to bury all wage control and win huge pay rises to make up for years of falling living standards under Labour rule. The union bureaucracy has been trying to prop up Callaghan with its usual techniques: fragmenting the strike movement and isolating workers along sectional and geographical lines. But the situation cries out for a general strike to smash the Concordat, win big wage rises and prevent the resurrection of wage controls in any guise.

Chaos in Britain: who is responsible?

When the lorry drivers were tying up industry through the use of militant secondary pickets, the bourgeois press was full of tearful tales of starving pigs in West Country farms and supermarkets barren of stocks. Now Fleet Street has turned its venom against local government strikers: depicting callous nurses and ambulance drivers cynically endangering the lives of the old and infirm; describing the piles of festering rubbish cluttering the streets of central London, with hordes of giant rats supposedly emerging from the sewers to feast on the filth.

They shriek that striking workers are to blame. Both Thatcher's Tories and (with appropriate social-democratic qualifiers) the Callaghan government join in the ugly anti-union chorus.

But this feigned concern for the well-being of the British populace is one hundred per cent hypocritical. It is especially nauseating coming from a government which has been busy running down social services, closing hospitals and schools and refusing to meet the local government unions' claim for a paltry £60 a week minimum, a wage just two-thirds of the national average for manual workers. Under four years of Labour government the working class has seen its standard of living forced down to a level below that of workers in Spain. Unemployment has soared from 600,000 to over a million and a half.

But even these attacks are nowhere near enough for the British bourgeoisie. With its chronically low productivity compared with most major capitalist competitors and its low level



Striking ambulance drivers call for £60 minimum wage on January 22

of domestic capital investment, the capitalist class must drive down living standards even further, create yet more unemployment and massively jack up the rate of exploitation. Otherwise, as a *Guardian* columnist recently quipped, this may yet prove to be the first country to pass from the 'second world' into the third.

In its attempts to rationalise this ailing capitalism, Britain's weak and divided bourgeoisie has come up time and again against the militant, well-organised working class. From the seamen's strike in 1966 to the miners' offensive in 1974 to the current pay explosion, the picture is basically the same: a faltering capitalist class tries to curb a strong working class which is unwilling to accept the 'sacrifices' demanded of it, but which lacks the leadership necessary to bring it decisive victory. Throughout this period the working class's own established leaders -- from the TUC to the Wilson and Callaghan cabinets -- have borne primary responsibility for policing the class.

The characteristic tactic of the TUC/Labour Party bureaucracy is to cultivate a distinction between 'economic' issues (for the unions) and 'politics' (for the party). By cynically claiming that they can have no control over the parliamentary party the union leaders seek to absolve themselves from any responsibility for its betrayals. And by arguing that a Labour government must be kept or put in Westminster at all costs, the bureaucrats help dampen working class economic struggle.

But despite their best efforts, the union/Labour bureaucrats have not been able to keep the lid clamped tight on working class militancy, and the austerity measures enacted by successive governments have by and large failed. Wilson's 1964-style Social Contract, the 'Declaration of Intent', and the 1969 anti-union policy 'In Place of Strife' were both crushed. The Tories' Industrial Relations Act of 1971 and their Phase Three got the same treatment. Now Callaghan's Phase Four lies in tatters as well.

Faced with such a situation, the capitalists are looking around for new solutions and new ways of implementing the old policies. The problem is, neither is very easy to find.

Who can implement the policies necessary for British capitalism: the wage cuts and the tight monetary controls which bring growing unemployment and deteriorating social services? Labour under Wilson and Callaghan couldn't; nor could a combination of Callaghan and Liberal leader David Steel. Heath and the Tories failed ignominiously, thanks to the miners; and the chances of the hated Margaret Thatcher succeeding where he failed seem slim indeed.

A national government?

In the short run the bourgeoisie may have no choice but to opt for a right-wing Thatcher government, but this clearly won't do the trick. One possibility being mooted ever more openly in the political columns of leading bourgeois papers -- and taken up by politicians ranging from Steel to Heath -- is for a National Government, like the ones which ruled during the depression of the 1930s and again in World War II.

But this too is fraught with difficulties for the bourgeoisie. The World War II grand coalition was justified to the workers by reference to the 'Nazi menace' and the 'national emergency'. The traitor Ramsay Macdonald was able to bolt from the Labour Party and form a coalition with the Tories and Liberals because the workers had already been decisively beaten five years previously in the General Strike. Although a minority Labour government was returned to office in 1929, the unions were totally unprepared to counter Macdonald's decision to form a coalition government two years later. The 1931 events thus represented in a sense a complementary defeat to that of 1926.

However today the working class is not defeated, and moreover remembers well the cost it paid for Macdonald's defection to the camp of open Toryism, when Labour representation in Parliament fell from nearly 300 to just above 50 in 1931 as the party's influence plummeted. Were Callaghan to try to form a coalition now with the Tories -- particularly with the rabidly anti-union Thatcherites -- he could well provoke

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