

Crush Smith and his lackeys!

Racist Rhodesia on borrowed time



ZANU guerrillas pledge to crush Smith regime

'We are *all* going to vote' proclaimed an official government slogan issued during the Rhodesian election in April. It was a threat, not a promise. To assure the highest possible voter turnout for this electoral farce, armed force and employer muscle were freely exercised. The black Rhodesian population was marched to the polls, often at gunpoint, to 'choose' among the black stooges of settler leader Ian Smith. Resistance was not tolerated: in one reported incident, fifteen Africans in the Sipolilo area north of Salisbury were killed by Rhodesian troops for refusing to attend an election meeting.

The whole elaborate electoral show was aimed at garnering the support of politicians in London and Washington for a palpably fraudulent 'internal settlement' which preserves white rule. But can it possibly work? The desperate white supremacists, their numbers diminishing every month as thousands more take the 'chicken run' to Britain and elsewhere, are pinning their hopes on sympathetic American senators and friendly right-wing Tories. To date the Thatcher government has cautiously embarked on a programme of creeping recognition, while the Carter administration, verbally more critical and preparing to square off against the Senate, is simply waiting and seeing.

If the imperialists could safely and indefinitely prop up Smith and his black front man, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, they would undoubtedly prefer such a 'stable' scenario. Yet if they opt for such a strategy and it fails, then what? Soviet influence in the area might be enhanced, the confidence of the black masses increased and white South Africa, the imperialist bastion of the region, left more vulnerable. If white supremacy has to pull back to the last laager south of the Limpopo, then the imperialists want it to happen in a way which least endangers South African stability.

More farsighted representatives of imperialist interests know, even if the US Senate and Tory neanderthals do not, that white settler Rhodesia is doomed. A stable neo-colonial solution almost certainly requires the incorporation of the leading forces of the Patriotic

Front, Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). While the imperialists would prefer a puppet like Muzorewa, they also know that both Nkomo and the supposedly more leftist Mugabe would happily accept a neo-colonial settlement if it would install *them* in power. Even Ian Smith remarked on ITV's 'Week-end World' in December that Mugabe was a 'very realistic and sensible person' who was simply 'playing with Marxism as a matter of convenience'.

But white Rhodesians, with wages eleven times those of blacks, have a material interest in the status quo very different from that of the international bourgeoisie, which has the option to be more flexible. One significant factor in determining the outlook of the typical Rhodesian Front supporter is that one-third of the white labour force is employed by the state apparatus -- that part of the economy most vulnerable to Africanisation. While skilled workers and the 6000 'gentlemen farmers' still around are 'gapping it' in increasing numbers, many whites are determined to fight to the last swimming pool. But their confidence has been sapped: numbers have dwindled below 230,000, living standards have been slashed by a quarter in the last five years and are declining further, the economy is reeling under the burden of defence expenditure, and a Dad's Army of 50-59 year olds is now being summoned for duty alongside their sons.

The whites in Rhodesia are in a far weaker position than their brethren in South Africa. While the South African whites are four million strong, with long-established roots and traditions in the country, the vastly weaker Rhodesians are essentially the remnant of a narrow colonial caste. In addition they face a guerrilla war of attrition which, precisely because of the weak, brittle character of Rhodesian white settler rule, could well succeed. Out-numbered twenty-four to one, they can only hope for a miracle -- whose most likely form would be imperialist intervention. As a recent 'historian of Rhodesia' noted:

'[White] Rhodesia since 1965 has been like a man

suffering from a slow haemorrhage or a gradual wasting disease. If it goes on, it will be fatal in the end. But the end seems a long way off, and there is always the chance of some new drug or some fresh technique which will arrest the process or even produce a cure.' (Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*)

The new drug being grasped at today is the 'internal settlement' and the bid for recognition through the recent electoral swindle.

The new 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia' is simply white supremacy in blackface. Twenty-eight of the 100 seats in parliament are reserved for whites. Any change in the stipulated white-majority officer corps, judiciary and state bureaucracy requires a three-fourths majority. Thus Smith's Rhodesian Front has a virtual veto to ensure continued white rule. Only squabbles -- such as the sulks of Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, former leader of ZANU, and his clashes with James Chikerema, former ZAPU top -- mar the parliamentary scene.

Smash white supremacist rule!

Revolutionaries must be resolutely on the side of a military victory for ZANU/ZAPU in the struggle to topple the white supremacist government of Smith and Muzorewa. But we give the components of the Patriotic Front not one iota of political support. We want to see the blood-drenched racist regime toppled, but we know that on the morrow Mugabe and Nkomo will show themselves to be implacable class enemies of the African proletariat. It will be good to see Smith and his cronies crushed -- not least because when the black masses are forced to confront their own *black* oppressors, this will bring nearer the day when they realise that their enemy is capitalism.

The feuding leaders of ZANU and ZAPU and

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Centrists sink into Labour swamp

Why the I-CL is moving right

One of the longest-standing of the numerous Trotskyoid groups and grouplets which clutter the British left is the current led by Sean Matgama, currently known as the International Communist League (I-CL). Yet after well over a decade of existence -- including periods of entry into other organisations, many years of public activity and consistently futile attempts at regroupment -- the I-CL remains a relatively small organisation, isolated in one country with no international supporters.

Over the past two years the I-CL's political profile has changed significantly -- at first slowly, and in the last year with increasing momentum. Formerly it tried to carve out a political niche just to the left of the United Secretariat (USec) and its British affiliate, the International Marxist Group (IMG), through the typical centrist recipe of single-issue propaganda blocs combined with economist trade union work. Lately, however, the I-CL has oriented more and more towards the Labour Party. And with the change in orientation has come a dramatic political shift to the right.

The right turn was heralded last summer, when the Workers Action (WA) tendency (which is in political solidarity with the I-CL) joined with the reformist Chartists to bring together a group of left Labour Party activists for the founding conference of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV). This reformist Labourite vehicle (with its 'roughly adequate programme') has become the key to WA's project of 'renovating the labour movement'.

Workers Action and the I-CL have always been more than willing to jettison programme and principle in the hope of getting a piece of the action -- all justified by a supposedly sophisticated 'anti-sectarianism'. But although the launching of the SCLV was thoroughly consistent with the group's evolved centrist methods, it was clearly rather different from run-of-the-mill propaganda blocs. Suddenly the Workers Action tendency -- with its little economist newspaper, its quirky left-Pabolite politics, and its history of innumerable (and inevitably unfruitful) schemes for breaking out of isolation -- thought it had found itself a potential winner.

No more 'far left' playpen politics for Workers Action: now they had hit the 'big time'. Aspiring parliamentary candidates Ernie Roberts, Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone were ready to grace SCLV platforms alongside WA spokesmen. The campaign was taking off ... but, as always for opportunists, there was a *quid pro quo*.

Workers Action began to print fewer and fewer political attacks on the likes of Ernie Roberts. WA supporters, schooled in polemics against similar opportunism on the part of Ted Grant's Militant group or the IMG, were now supposed to listen politely to the empty phrases of a Roberts or a Livingstone and then applaud. The WA leadership's new script demanded vocal support for these limp 'lefts', with the barest whisper of mild criticism.

Like the Chartists before them, and Militant before that, WA is now learning how to wheel and deal among the careerists who populate the lower echelons of the Labour Party bureaucracy. And

like their forebears they are leaving their politics behind, excess baggage on a flight to social democracy.

Round the reformist treadmill

In October the SCLV's very own newspaper, *Socialist Organiser* (SO) appeared. During the following six months of foot-slogging and garnering votes for Callaghan, SO filled its soporific pages with flattering interviews with parliamentary aspirants, friendly messages from union bureaucrats like Arthur Scargill, standard Labourite Tory-bashing, and stirring social-democratic 'debates' about whether to support local council rates increases.

In the spring WA decided to form a bloc for 'democracy in the LPYS' with the right-wing Clause Four tendency. Clause Four predictably tried to use this bloc in order to attack the 'Marxism' of the Militant majority. In the same period *Workers Action* uncritically published a statement on the council workers strike by Labour reformists Atkinson, Knight and Race, an



Workers Action-backed Ted Knight: 'I'm for rates increases'

act which provoked vehement protest on the letters page but was defended down the line ('smart tactics') by the leadership.

Underpinning all the rest was WA's all-out campaign for the re-election of the most right-wing, overtly anti-working class Labour government since at least World War II. Not only did the call to vote Labour last May have nothing in common with Leninist tactics aimed at breaking militant workers from the social-democratic traitors, but WA's whole campaign was a brazen left cover for the Labour strikebreakers. A banner headline in *Socialist Organiser* summed it up: 'Defend the unions -- vote Labour!'

Now, with Labour out and the Tories in office, WA is helping to form *Socialist Organiser* groups throughout the country to carry forward the miserable work of the SCLV. SO openly proclaims its desire to serve as a mouth-piece for the entire Labour left, relating with especial fraternity to Tony Benn's Labour Coordinating Committee.

Nor is SO beyond shoddy self-serving cover-ups. To take only one recent example: immediately after the election four Labour MPs, among them Dennis Skinner and Ernie Roberts, spoke to the paper about the election and the situation inside the party. One of Roberts' comments was proudly printed in bold type: 'I favour a complete change of leadership and direction'. You would never know from reading *Socialist Organiser* (or, for that matter, *Workers Action*) that a few days later Roberts joined SO's other fondly quoted MPs and everyone else in the parliamentary party to unanimously elect James

Callaghan as party leader.

With the kind of not-very-left social-democratic support *Socialist Organiser* is now picking up in London, even when WA decides to make a rare stand against some particularly odious specimen of Labourite reformism it finds itself wholly impotent. The latest example came at an SCLV conference on local government finance on June 16. WA meekly approached the august gathering of local councillors and community activists with a low-key request for a commitment to oppose rent and rates increases.

But to the dozens of eminently practical SCLV-supporting councillors, frowning their brows over how best to administer the local capitalist government in these difficult times (and, incidentally, over how to get re-elected), such proposals were lunacy. Thoroughly isolated, WA was trounced in the vote. Its milk-and-water criticisms could not even serve as a pole of opposition among the social-democratic cretins it had worked so hard to bring together. Having done its best to build a reformist creature, WA now begs it not to succumb to reformist logic -- but to no avail.

Fighting 'sectarianism'

A Chartist spokesman at the local government conference spoke for most of those attending when he charged WA with being 'passive propagandists', adding that with their positions they 'should be in the WRP, not the Labour Party'. It is indeed ironic that WA's SCLV bloc partners now attack it for 'passive propagandism' and other dreaded 'sectarian' vices. For the WA leadership resolved to initiate the right turn which led to the SCLV precisely in order to fight what they saw as 'sectarian', self-isolating tendencies inside their organisation.

In 1975 the group, then called Workers Fight, entered a mini-boom period. First came a much-publicised 'fusion' with the Workers Power group to form the I-CL -- trumpeted as the most important event on the British far left since the founding of the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1944. Next was a petty exercise in international unprincipled combinationism, the Necessary International Initiative, linking the I-CL with the German Spartacusbund and Italian FMR -- all groups with differing programmes, but convergent appetites to find a niche somewhere a bit to the left of the USec swamp (but as far away as possible from the Trotskyism of the international Spartacist tendency). Domestically, the Working Women's Charter Campaign (WWCC) still had some life in it, and the I-CL could play a seemingly important role in this charade.

Then the whole house of cards came tumbling down. The Workers Power fusion -- a Menshevik unity based on an agreement to disagree on such questions as the Soviet Union (termed a 'tenth-rate' issue), Ireland and the Labour Party -- came unstuck before 1976 was out. The NII fizzled, and the component parts are either disintegrating (Spartacusbund) or heading back towards the USec (FMR), under the same pressure which the I-CL has faced in trying to find that non-existent middle ground between Pabloism and Trotskyism. The WWCC whimpered to an inglorious death, despite all the I-CL's convoluted accommodations to petty-bourgeois feminism.

Nor was their trade union work producing anything. Determined to emulate the IS/SWP 'rank-and-file movement' while tacking another demand or two onto its platform, they have always been lost in the shadow of their larger competitors. In 1977, as I-CLers picked away at producing their turgid 'Manifesto', the IMG appeared to be making some headway with its Menshevik 'unity offensive'. So early the following year the I-CL published its very own 'Theses on Revolutionary Unity', hoping that this brave new venture would put an end to the soul-searching which the organisation's aimless drifting had induced. Again, of course, the I-CL had to further water down its programme in case the latter became a fetter on its opportunist appetites.

Inside the Labour Party, Workers Action supporters were joining hands with the Chartists to make common propaganda interventions at two suc-

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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September 24, 1978: Spartacist League contingent helps defend Brick Lane from fascist march as ANL vegetarians and SWP 'anti-racists' rock the day away in Brixton

Militants resign from SWP

We reprint below the resignation statement of two ex-members of the Bristol Socialist Workers Party (SWP). As their covering letter to us (also reprinted below) makes clear, both comrades have the perspective of discussing and working with the Spartacist League, with a view to becoming members. Although we differ with some specific formulations in the statement (particularly the description of the Labour Party as 'capitalist' rather than as a bourgeois workers party), it is a powerful, revolutionary-minded condemnation of the opportunist and anti-Marxist politics of the SWP. Both the statement and letter have been slightly abridged for space reasons.

Bristol, 4 June 1979

Spartacist League
Comrades,

We enclose a copy of our resignation from the SWP which sets out some of our reasons for resigning.

We met some of your comrades recently at a socialist forum and we have read some of your literature. We have been impressed by your forthright declaration of Marxism.

If you agree we would like to be considered as strong sympathisers. We are willing to contribute, for the time being the equivalent of our SWP subscriptions to your organisation. We are willing to distribute any of your propaganda, sell *Spartacist Britain* etc if you want us to. We would welcome your political guidance and request permission to come under your discipline at demonstrations.[...]

Comradely,
Jim Wills
Tracey Pyke

Bristol, 4 June 1979

[Socialist Workers Party]
Comrades,

As you will all by now know we have decided that we must part company with the SWP.... This letter is written in the hope that it will be read by the branch and the points we make noted. We have in our possession £5 belonging to the Hospital Fraction and 50p for rank and file magazines. We will hand these monies to a member of the branch committee at the earliest opportunity.

In our opinion before a party can be a revolutionary party it must have a revolutionary programme. It is not the membership which makes a revolutionary party but the revolutionary character of its programme. The Labour Party for instance has a strong working-class base but it is capitalist. Why? Because it has a reformist bourgeois programme. In fact the revolutionary vanguard should be de-classed, otherwise they either have petty-bourgeois interests or the proletariat's illusions and chauvinism.

The SWP does not have a revolutionary programme and for a long time we have felt that it is reformist and opportunist. The reason we feel is that there has been a deliberate revision of Lenin and Marx by the leadership.

During the general election the SWP became the acolytes of the Labour Party traitors with the call to vote Labour to defend the unions. Do you mean to say that Labour will defend the

unions? One of us is, as you know, a NUPE shop steward -- did Labour defend the interests of NUPE members? The only possible reason to make a call for a Labour vote is to put them in office to expose them. They had nearly five years and have been shown up for what they are. Instead of saying to the class 'Look at what Labour has done, don't vote for them or the bosses' parties. Break with them. Only a revolutionary party with a revolutionary programme can protect your interests', you said, 'Vote Labour -- defend the unions -- keep the Tories out'. The only thing we can say in the SWP's favour is that you dropped the pretence of being a mass party and did not put up candidates.[...]

Roger Cox when he visited Bristol said, 'We have turned away from the class for the last three years, we must turn back'. Oh yes! So you think that the working class can be treated with contempt, you think that you will be trusted in spite of the desertion of the last 3 years.

Your history is marked, and in our opinion marred, by opportunist adventures like the ANL. Don't you understand that broad-based supra-class movements are not the way forward? They are in fact diversions and road blocks to the interests of the proletariat.

Amid much bally-hoo 30 April 1978 saw 80,000 people at the Carnival 1 pop concert. The following day, in spite of the fact that both the ANL and the SWP Central Committee had weeks of warning, the NF stormed Brick Lane. The SWP's Lib-Lab cohort Peter Hain sought to justify this betrayal by saying 'Everyone was exhausted after the Carnival' (*Socialist Challenge*, 6 May 1978). You could quote Lenin and say 'We made mistakes'. The difference between the SWP and the Bolsheviks was that they did not perpetually make the same mistakes.

The betrayal of the working class and oppressed minorities of Brick Lane took a new twist on 24 September 1978 at Carnival 2. Instead of mobilising the 100,000 plus pseudo anti-fascists against the NF the ANL/SWP marched them away to a pop concert in Hyde Park and left Brick Lane undefended against the rioting Nazis and cops. That was terrible, but worse was to come. Paul Holborow, who was showing his true petty-bourgeois liberal colours, stood on the platform and said 'At this moment 3000 anti-fascists are defending Brick Lane'. He knew he was lying and should be anathema to a revolutionary organisation -- he is a scab. Then the next week *Socialist (punk) Worker* sought to justify this betrayal. Remembrance Sunday proved you can organise pop shows but not smash fascism. You used the same old Grand Old Duke of York tactics at Winchester, but at Leicester you degenerated into Guevarism.

[To] those of you who justify the ANL by saying it is a propaganda machine, we respectfully suggest you look at that propaganda, with its 'never again' chauvinism. It shows Jews in concentration camps. That would be correct if you also showed what happened to Dresden. Did you know that 500,000 workers were cooked alive in one night because of fascism and imperialism? A deliberate attempt was made by the ANL to appeal to the anti-jerry mentality of British working-class chauvinism.[...]

On Iran the SWP followed the same old opportunist trail. We think that the vanguard working

class party should be the watchdog and warn workers of the true nature of things that are going on around them, no matter how unpopular that might be. But the SWP in the early days of this year and the latter part of last year did not warn the workers of Britain and Iran of the true nature of the mullahs. They made no secret of what they were going to do. You should have warned that they were going to veil women, mutilate petty criminals, hang rapists and homosexuals, flog and stone adulterers. But no, you did not speak out against the feudalist clerics. Why? We suggest that it is because you thought you could gain ground by being popular. At this moment in time the left in Iran is being purged by the bazaaris and mullahs. We hope you think of the persecuted Iranian working class the next time you go off into popularity.

We would like to inform the 'Reclaim the Night' feminists amongst you that in Iran it's not a question of 'he does not care', 'he does not wash the dishes', 'he wonders why I can't come all the time'. No! In Iran a man owns his woman like he owns his goats. It is a question of life and death. The next time you have a Women's Voice meeting you think about that, and that you supported the mullahs by your silence. Now do you understand our criticisms over these last few months?

Your mullah loving cohorts in CARI attacked another left group on a demonstration in London for calling 'Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs'. Did the SWP and IMG follow the democratic tradition of Leninism? No! Instead of supporting the Spartacist League with fist and boots if necessary, you tried to get the bourgeois state to do the job. If that sort of thing is going on in London, what the hell is going on in Iran?

We could give examples on Ireland, women's oppression, the unions to show that the SWP is revisionist, reformist, populist, workerist and a whole host of other errors. We see no future in further participation in these betrayals. We know it is easy to stand aloof and criticise, but we think that in spite of our differences we worked hard in the branch and therefore we have a right to point out errors.

Yours comradely,

Jim Wills [Works convenor, Welding Industries Ltd, Bristol; EETPU Avon No 1 Branch Committee 1976-78. NUPE shop steward, Brentry Hospital, Bristol 1978-79. SWP 1976-79.]

Tracey Pyke [SWP 1978-79.]

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2.00 The Leninist vanguard party

Readings/details from:
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When the British freighter Sibonga picked up nearly a thousand Vietnamese 'boat people' in the South China Sea last May, the Tory government was confronted with a problem. How were these people to be treated: as more Asian immigrants who must be stopped from 'flooding the country'? Or were they 'refugees from communism', to be feted and welcomed into Britain with open arms? Torn between its racist commitment to slash to the bone non-white immigration and its stridently anti-Soviet foreign policy, the government finally agreed to accept a small quota of boat people as a concession to pressure from other imperialist powers, particularly the US, and from the administration of the tiny overcrowded crown colony of Hong Kong.

The boat people are still leaving Vietnam in their thousands: some make it to the US, Australia, Canada and France, but most end up in disease-ridden refugee camps in the poor capitalist countries of Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. And the whole situation has provoked a major international furore.

On the one hand, the imperialists, the Chinese Stalinists and the right-wing capitalist regimes of Southeast Asia are railing against Vietnam for allegedly forcing hundreds of thousands of 'industrious citizens' out of the country, and then callously profiting from their misery by collecting gold bullion in exchange for exit permits. In response the Vietnamese rulers, backed by the USSR, claim that they are only trying to expedite the departure of those who wish to leave, and rightly denounce the hypocrisy of the imperialist mass murderers who showed so little concern for 'human rights' during the long genocidal colonial war in Indochina.

The question of the boat people has provoked varied, and not always immediately predictable, responses from both the far right and left of the political spectrum in Britain. The fascist scum of the National Front have decided to play up their 'yellow peril' chauvinist theme rather than anti-communism. On June 23 they organised a march on Downing Street demanding that no boat people (or any other non-whites) be admitted to Britain.

Meanwhile, the nominally Trotskyist International Marxist Group, one-time fervent admirer of the Vietnamese Stalinist leadership, has donned sackcloth and ashes in order to bemoan the past sins of the British labour movement in 'failing to oppose imperialism' (*Socialist Challenge*, 14 June). Thus, like bleeding-heart liberals, they plead that there is no choice but to allow the unfettered admission of boat people into Britain, and pointedly refuse to demand that any anti-communist war criminals among them be shipped back to stand trial in Vietnam.

What, in contrast, do authentic Trotskyists have to say about this question? Who are these boat people, and why are they leaving Vietnam?

After the revolution

When the DRV/NLF forces finally smashed capitalist class rule in Saigon in April 1975, the professional torturers working for imperialism, the ruthless war profiteers, the drug traffickers and the remnants of the indigenous capitalist police force and army immediately began a furious scramble to get out of the country. Their suitcases packed with everything from gold bars to heroin, the human refuse of the corrupt Thieu dictatorship frantically piled onto the ships, planes and helicopters of their US imperialist overlords to be whisked away to the safety of America, Australia and elsewhere.

At the time the Spartacist tendency demanded 'No asylum for Indochinese war criminals', and called for the return of these vicious killers and torturers to Vietnam. We said they should be brought to justice before the napalm victims and starving peasants they exploited and sought to butcher into submission. We also warned that these thugs could become a stridently rightist organising centre for attempts to restore capitalist rule in Vietnam, as well as for attacks on the working class in their new countries of residence.

Already this has happened. Former professional hitmen of the Thieu regime who made it to Australia after 1975 have been banding together in fascist organisations like the Greater Overseas Alliance for the National Restoration of Vietnam (GOANRV) and the revanchist Vietnamese Association of Australia (VAA), and have begun systematic harassment of the workers movement there. On April 20, 200 of these thugs staged a vicious attack on a trade union-organised concert to aid Vietnam in Sydney, injuring several workers (see

Australasian Spartacist no 63, May 1979). Like the US-based *gusanos* who fled Cuba following the revolution, and who have similarly steeped themselves in the dirtiest, bloodiest anti-communist work, scum like GOANRV and VAA are a threat to the workers movement in whatever country they finally come to rest.

In the four years since that first wave of fugitives left Vietnam, thousands more have seeped out of the country into neighbouring states or onto awaiting ships and boats. But whereas those who fled in 1975 were



Imperialist hypocrisy and the 'boat people'

almost to a man collaborators with the US administration or its client regime in Saigon, later exodus seem to have been composed mainly of relatively small-time components of the old capitalist regime (businessmen, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers and the like) or trained professionals like engineers and doctors.

Often ethnic Chinese (Hua Vietnamese), these people have been leaving Vietnam ever since the fall of the Thieu regime led to a dramatic drop in their living standards and opportunity for capital accumulation. More recently, they have been joined by thousands more (again, mainly ethnic Chinese) whose businesses were expropriated in the nationalisations of last year. And of course sprinkled among every boatload are the ubiquitous drug pushers, pimps, and a few remaining officers of Thieu's army who failed to get a ticket out in 1975.

No doubt among those heading out of the country are many particularly odious types who amassed fortunes through wholesale corruption and servicing of US imperialism's personnel during the war. But the chief criminals -- Nguyen Cao Ky, Thieu and the rest -- unfortunately got out early, courtesy of their imperialist masters. Those leaving now have always been much more marginal and dispensable to imperialism: the very fact that it is they who are left helpless in the South China Sea, not the Marshal Kys, is eloquent testimony to that.

Particularly given the national-chauvinist clamour being raised by the NF and other right-wingers against the boat people, it could only be racist and chauvinist to campaign against

their admission to Britain. And while we are militantly unenthusiastic about the arrival of well-heeled anti-communists whose speciality is trade in prostitution or opium, we recognise that just as Castro didn't want the *gusanos*, neither does the Hanoi government seem to want these disaffected pro-capitalist elements on its hands. As for identified war criminals among the current wave of fugitives, they should be sent back immediately to Vietnam to stand trial -- as should the butcher Thieu, who today lives comfortably in a London suburb.

The anti-Soviet crusade

While making no concessions to anti-Asian chauvinism against the boat people, revolutionaries must intransigently combat the anti-communist furore which the bourgeoisie has whipped up over their plight. The stories cramming the bourgeois press about refugees 'risking all by taking to the sea in leaky, overcrowded craft to flee an implacably totalitarian regime' (*Observer*, 3 June) are grist to imperialism's anti-communist mill and are intended to generate popular support for actions against the deformed workers states.

The current frenzy comes in the context of Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet 'human rights' crusade, which is also aimed against close allies of the USSR like Vietnam. Thus the fact that 48,000 illegal emigrants from China entered Hong Kong in May alone has been studiously downplayed by the world press, as eager to denounce Vietnam and the USSR as it is to uphold US imperialism's reactionary alliance with Peking.

The poor Southeast Asian capitalist states in the anti-communist ASEAN alliance, which have to grapple directly with the problem of tens of thousands of boat people arriving on their shores, have followed the lead of their imperialist patrons. While milking the issue for anti-Vietnamese propaganda, they have taken a tough line against the refugees themselves. For example Malaysia (where the Muslim elite fears the powerful Chinese minority) recently accepted unhesitatingly 70,000 Muslim refugees from the Philippines; however it threatened to shoot any boat people who approached its shores. (Now it says it would merely tow them back out to sea.)

The imperialists are itching to take punitive action against Vietnam, although they can hardly take any more non-military measures since economic and political sanctions are already in full force. The crushing defeat of US imperialism in Indochina four years ago makes direct military intervention in the near future unlikely. However there is an immediate real danger that the imperialists will egg China into trying to teach Vietnam another 'bloody lesson'. In addition, skirmishes with Vietnamese vessels in the South China Sea, or a qualitative extension of military and financial backing for Thai-based guerrilla forces (including the remnants of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge) can certainly not be ruled out. Actions like these could pave the way for imperialist adventures on a larger scale. Whatever such measures the capitalists may take, Trotskyists will rally to the unconditional defence of the deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution.

While some of the facts about the current exodus from Vietnam are murky, the basic outlines of the situation are clear -- and they bear only the slightest resemblance to the stories of the bourgeois mass media. The Hanoi bureaucracy evidently fears that its largely middle-class ethnic Chinese population could be a point of support for international plots aimed at capitalist restoration, or could perhaps act as a fifth column should the Peking Stalinists reinvade the country with the complicity of imperialism.

However, contrary to the claims of the imperialist press, there is no reliable evidence that these people are being rounded up and herded out of the country against their will. Rather, faced with the prospect of sharing the hardships suffered by the majority of the population -- and often with doing a stint of labour in the New Economic Zones to help rebuild the ravaged economy -- they have chosen instead to leave the country.

Many of the ethnic Chinese people may have also suffered national/racial persecution at the hands of the Vietnamese bureaucracy. Moreover the virulently chauvinist propaganda directed at them by the Peking Stalinists and by Vietnam's capitalist enemies -- all aimed at painting the Vietnamese as inhuman anti-Chinese butchers -- has helped to create an atmosphere of fear and panic.

As Trotskyists we have no confidence that

the Vietnamese bureaucracy can safeguard the rights of national/racial minorities, least of all of a minority which they regard as a potential enemy. But the outraged protests of the Peking Stalinists about anti-Chinese chauvinism on the part of the Vietnamese are patently cynical, coming from a regime which has institutionalised Han-chauvinist oppression of national minorities in its own country. Moreover, this is the same Chinese regime whose invasion of Vietnam earlier this year exacerbated the grave economic problems which have contributed greatly to the size of the recent exodus.

The bourgeoisie's protestations of humanitarian concern are even more staggeringly hypocritical. For thirty years first the French, then US imperialism butchered Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese alike in their attempts to crush all opposition to their rule in Indochina. The B-52 bombing raids, the napalm showers and the tiger cages left almost one million workers and peasants dead. Agricultural land and forests throughout the country are now unusable, thanks to the US government's sophisticated chemical defoliants; the crucial irrigation system is likewise in ruins. Staple food rations were thus deficient by 30 per cent nationally this year.

Moreover, when it came to refugees from the undisputed terror of a right-wing capitalist regime, Pinochet's Chile, the US imperialists and Chinese Stalinists simply didn't want to hear about it. They closed their doors to countless leftists seeking to flee the murderous junta and its torture chambers in the Santiago stadium.

Immigration/emigration and the deformed workers states

Ironically, the imperialists are now making a hue and cry over a situation in which people are being *allowed* to emigrate from one of the deformed workers states. More often, their refrain is that the Soviet Union and its allies forcibly *prevent* citizens from emigrating. The imperialist furore over the Berlin Wall and the Zionist-inspired campaign to 'Free Soviet Jewry' are clear cases in point.

As Leninists we uphold individual democratic rights, including the right to immigrate/emigrate, for citizens of the deformed workers states, except where the exercise of such rights would be a direct danger to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For example, if there is a bona fide danger that an individual would transmit military intelligence to an imperialist power we would defend restrictions on his right to emigrate.

Circumstances like acute economic difficulties or military mobilisation could also warrant a total or partial ban on emigration to prevent a drain on manpower and much-needed skilled personnel. Furthermore, we uphold the right of the workers states to prevent the frittering away through emigration of resources they have expended on the education and training of skilled professionals -- although we would demand that emigration restrictions on such people



NF scum in chauvinist march against boat people

Spartacist Britain

not be subject to bureaucratic favouritism or national/ethnic discrimination.

In the case of Vietnam today, the Hanoi bureaucracy has apparently not tried to stop the skilled and educated among the boat people from leaving the country, but is actually expediting their departure. Many of those leaving are taking with them stocks of gold which they have been hoarding, or have already salted such gold away in neighbouring countries.

So the Vietnamese government has apparently been levying an 'expatriate departure tax' on each boatload of refugees, amounting to an average of about four *taels* [five ounces] of gold per person. The fee is collected by a boat organiser, who leaves it up to each prospective boatload to raise the required total amount, and then passed on to the government. The result is that while some of the richer refugees pay more than four *taels*, a fair number of those leaving (about 15 per cent) reportedly do not have to pay any tax at all.

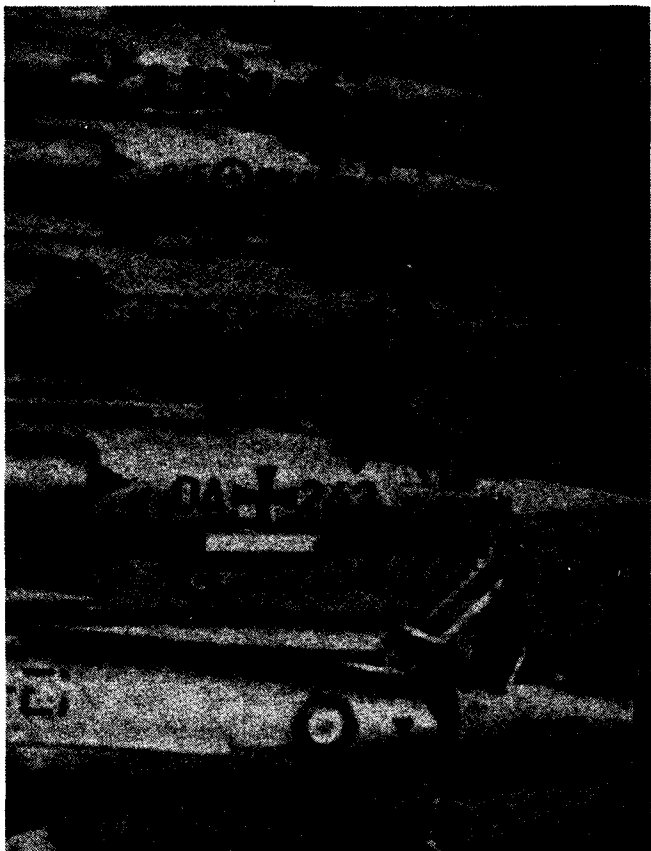
Again the imperialist media howl that the bureaucracy is raking in vast profits by means of this tax. No doubt the system *is* attended by many instances of bureaucratic abuse. But the government's policy is apparently motivated primarily by a desire to get a cut of the funds which wealthy refugees are trying to remove from the country. As a means of recouping some of the

losses which the current drain on manpower, skills and financial reserves must entail, the policy seems to provide a measure of rough justice (certainly in comparison to the treatment of would-be refugees from right-wing capitalist countries). In general, Trotskyists do not oppose measures taken for the economic defence of the workers states.

But facts matter little to the imperialists, except as they can be fitted into the anti-Soviet barrage. The US ravaged Vietnam for more than a decade in a losing colonial war which became increasingly unpopular at home. Now Washington and its allies are trying to exploit the plight of the boat people (which they did so much to create!) as part of their crusade to stir up mass support for a renewed offensive against the Soviet bloc states.

The historic victory of the NLF/DRV was a blow against capitalist rule across the globe. But the Vietnamese revolution also brought to power a bureaucratic caste which cannot and will not extend the gains of the revolution.

Yet so long as capitalism continues to exist the conditions for renewed genocidal wars and slaughter -- even for the possible annihilation of the human race -- will continue with it. Only victorious socialist revolution throughout the capitalist world and political revolution from Peking to Moscow, Hanoi and Havana can offer mankind a future. ■



NATO jets

The SALT hoax

The Great SALT Debate has begun. The US imperialists -- who saturated Vietnam with terror bombing raids until the country looked like a crater-pocked moonscape, who brought a murderous wall of fire to Dresden and deadly nuclear destruction to Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- fill the air with talk about 'the cause of peace'.

SALT is a phoney. The arms build-up will continue to escalate as before. Since SALT 1 was signed in 1972 the US has added three new warheads to its missile force *every day*. And President Carter has recently approved the development of the new MX mobile missile, which will triple the number of warheads in the existing Minuteman 3.

The SALT debate is phoney. SALT 'doves' and 'hawks' agree on stepped-up war 'preparedness'. For all the speeches about 'deterrence', the 'missile gap' and the 'need for security', imperialist disarmament schemes are a propaganda smokescreen behind which the capitalists' war machine grinds exceedingly fast.

What is real is that every missile is aimed at the Soviet Union, the industrial/military powerhouse of that third of the world where capitalism has been overthrown.

A recent US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency document states that the present arsenal can destroy 200 Soviet cities. About 60 warheads would strike Moscow, for instance, with 1400 times the megatonnage that hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 'Not a building or a tree would remain standing.'

Our opposition to the war drive of the American ruling class, which includes its 'disarmament' hoaxes, is not that of pacifistic liberals. We recognise that the USSR, based upon a collectivised economy, is, despite its oppressive Stalinist bureaucracy, a great historic gain for the workers of the world. We defend the Soviet Union against imperialist militarism and support it having whatever weapons are necessary for that purpose.

The danger is that the Soviet bureaucrats believe in the illusions of detente, in their desire to reach accord with and rely on the imperialist 'doves'. In contrast to the counterrevolutionary Stalinist bureaucrats who peddle 'disarmament' schemes, revolutionaries recognise that war and nuclear armaments will end only with the advent of international proletarian revolution. We stand in the tradition of Leon Trotsky, who posed the question 40 years ago: 'But the entire question revolves around who will disarm whom. The only disarmament which can avert or end war is the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by the workers.'

Racist Rhodesia...

(Continued from page 1)

their erstwhile colleagues who have gone over to the 'internal settlement' have been angling for nearly two decades to get imperialism to install them in power. Guerrilla struggle was begun as a pressure tactic and escalated only because imperialism proved impervious to pressure. In the nearly sixteen years since the ZANU/ZAPU split of 1963 the Zimbabwean nationalist movement has been rife with personalist and cliquish squabbles, with overtones of tribalism and regionalism. Murky splits and bloody internecine fights there have been aplenty, but never of course a serious programmatic contest.



Nkomo, UN Secretary General Waldheim, Mugabe: they aim to keep 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia' safe for capitalism

Recognising that divisions have weakened their hand, the ZANU and ZAPU leaders first put together the Patriotic Front for the 1976 Geneva talks. It has never been a secret that this unity meant little. In the face of Muzorewa's recent challenge, Nkomo and Mugabe predictably began to talk more about their 'united front' against Smith. But however much they may spout 'Marxist-Leninist' rhetoric, the perspective of these petty-bourgeois nationalists is in no way proletarian or internationalist. They in no way seek to mobilise the independent strength of the nearly one million black workers in the country, let alone to tap the even more powerful proletariat of South Africa.

ZAPU was founded in 1961 as the successor to the National Democratic Party (NDP) which had earlier been banned by the white Rhodesian regime. The NDP in its turn had been formed to replace the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (SRANC), illegalised in 1959. The SRANC, a fusion of the City Youth League with Joshua Nkomo's Bulawayo ANC, chose Nkomo as its head despite his dishonourable past. A former lay preacher and social worker cum trade union bureaucrat who had flirted with the reactionary Moral Rearmament movement, and had stood unsuccessfully for office as a stooge in the settler-run parliament, Nkomo then spent much of his time abroad, pleading the nationalist case in imperialist capitals. The SRANC programme itself affirmed 'complete loyalty to the Crown as a symbol of national unity'. Later the NDP leadership accepted the terms of a 1961 government settlement which was in no way superior to the present sellout, and had to execute an about-face when the party ranks revolted.

Restlessness and frustration in ZAPU came to a head in 1963, but this was not over opposition to the politics of betrayal. When the organisation was banned, Nkomo wanted a leadership in exile and opposed forming a new legal party. The opposition led by Sithole, which went on to form ZANU, attacked Nkomo for capital-hopping, but beyond this there were no discernible differences.

The split led to vicious warfare between the factions. Nathan Shamurariya, then a ZANU supporter, describes the widely acknowledged situation:

'In 1964 the battle to gain support went on... Several people were killed after being stabbed

or beaten up; in Highfield there was nearly always one death each weekend after party clashes.' (*Crisis in Rhodesia*)

There were elements of tribalism in the scission as well. Nkomo's base of support has come from the Ndebele-speaking minority, while ZANU has always had backing from the Shona-speaking majority. This division has never been absolute, and Matabele-Mashona rivalry does not approach the depth of tribal division in other areas of the continent. But, as Shamurariya cautioned: 'The danger of an outburst of tribal feelings is always there, as in other African countries, and cannot be minimised' (*ibid*).

This was not the only split in which accusations of cliquism, privilege and incompetence have flown about. In the late 1960s a feud among ZAPU supporters in Zambia led to major confrontations between rival factions. The treacherous Kaunda regime showed the true mettle of neo-colonialism when it used this dispute not only to detain ZAPU guerrillas, but also to deport 129 men to white Rhodesia, where a number were imprisoned or sentenced to death.

The Zambian government also detained more than 1000 ZANU members when infighting culminated in the car-bomb murder of ZANU leader-in-exile Herbert Chitepo in 1975. A disputed commission of inquiry report suggested that conflict among rival Shona clans was responsible. Power struggles continue to erupt today -- for example, it has recently been reported that the majority of the executive of London ZANU have been expelled.

No left split

It is easy to insist today that the Reverend Sithole, who led ZANU until recently, was never to the left of Nkomo. Today the reverend has a seat in Smith's parliament. Yet the idea that ZANU was some sort of left faction is a long cherished illusion of sundry Third Worldists and Maoists, who noted its Chinese backing (like the Angolan FNLA!) and found support from Peking more palatable than the backing doled out to Nkomo's ZAPU by 'Tiny' Rowlands of Lonrho.

Mugabe, who captured the leadership of ZANU from Sithole a few years ago, has always had a somewhat tougher reputation. But like Nkomo, Mugabe took off straight after the 1963 split to consult with the Tory Minister for Central African Affairs. For those who are soothed by the occasional stirring 'Marxist' phrase, both ZAPU and ZANU will oblige. But, as Lenin noted, fine words butter no parsnips. The best indicator of Mugabe's true colours is his repeated calls on British imperialism 'to exercise her responsibilities' and convene 'another conference like Geneva in 1976' (*Zimbabwe: The Final Advance*, 1978). As for his social programme for the 'new Zimbabwe', this was accurately captured by the *Irish Times* (7 February):

'One senior Churchman who knows him well recalls Mr Mugabe's description of Zimbabwe as he would envisage it: "There would be more Europeans than ever before because we need their expertise. There would be plenty of outside capital coming in. And there would be a guaranteed supply of plentiful, cheap labour."'

This is the 'African socialism' ZANU seeks: neo-colonialist exploitation not one whit different in kind from Nyerere's Tanzania or the Machel government of Mozambique.

The British fake-Trotskyist left would certainly have liked to do its bit to peddle illusions in Mugabe and Nkomo, but the tarnished histories of these feuding nationalists are simply too well known in Britain to permit any success. The real crime of the British fake-lefts has been to assist in building illusions that the imperial government in Westminster can be forced to play a progressive role by helping to topple the Smith regime. Thus just prior to the 1976 Geneva conference the International Marxist Group demanded that 'The Labour Government shouldn't be "negotiating" with the racists, it should be arming the freedom fighters.' (*Red Weekly*, 23 September 1976). And the self-styled 'orthodox Trotskyists' of the Workers Socialist League were equally explicit:

'It must be a priority demand in the British labour movement that the Labour government be forced to abandon its policy of support for racists and collaborationists, and to replace it by one of sending arms and material assistance to the black liberation movement throughout Southern Africa.' (*Socialist Press*, 6 October 1976)

What these craven Labour-loyalists wish to gloss over is that even if a British government were to 'send arms and material assistance', this would be *exclusively* to further its own imperialist aims and strengthen capitalist con-

trol of the Rhodesian economy. Indeed it is possible that Britain will dispatch arms to Rhodesia at some point -- no doubt covering its actions with talk of fighting for freedom and democracy. Such an intervention would not necessarily be the direct deployment of Royal Marine Commandos, but could well consist of support to a pliant insurgent group, akin to the US/South Africa backing for Unita in Angola in 1975. The IMG/WSL policy helps serve as a cover for such imperialist intervention.

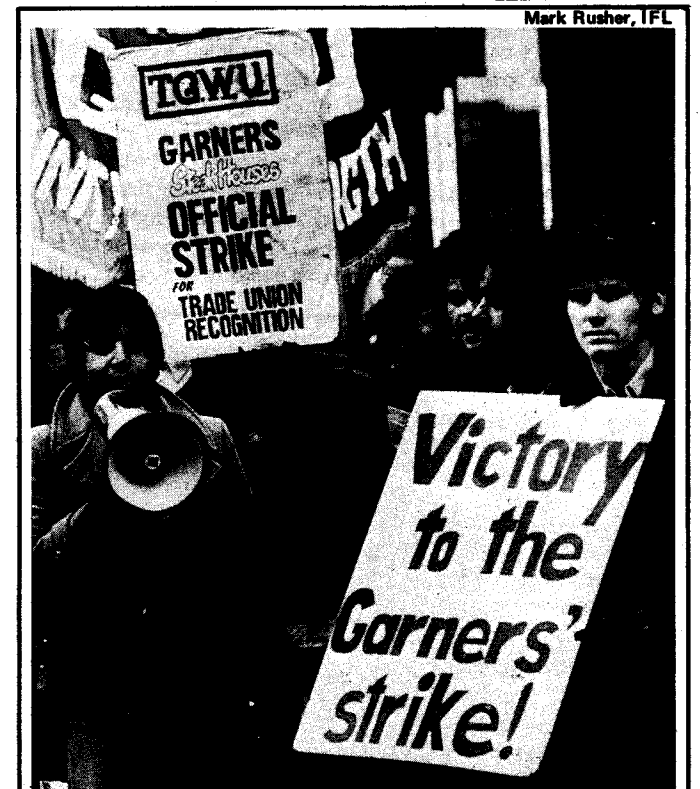
For a Zimbabwean workers and peasants government

ZANU/ZAPU's guerrilla war can topple the brittle Rhodesian settler caste which now rules the roost and thus end white supremacy in the country. But while welcoming the military defeat of the racist Smith regime, we recognise that the exploitation of the black masses will not end until they themselves hold power in their own right. The guerrillaism of Nkomo and Mugabe will not accomplish that task, but can only create another neo-colonial African regime.

Moreover, the nationalists' call for 'majority rule' is a conveniently vague demand which leaves open the form of government -- democratic or bonapartist -- they plan to establish. In contrast, Trotskyists call for a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage in order to meet the felt democratic needs of the black masses. In addition, we demand full trade union rights for black workers and call for international working-class action to help win those rights. As a concrete act of solidarity with those fighting the white supremacist regime we call for trade union blacking of all military goods to the Salisbury government.

The Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution can alone guarantee the achievement of these basic democratic goals. A mass Trotskyist vanguard party is needed to lead the historically militant black working class in socialist revolution, to establish a Zimbabwean workers and peasants government within a socialist federation of southern Africa. As part of a reformed Fourth International, the Zimbabwean revolutionary vanguard would seek in particular to forge links with the powerful black proletariat of neighbouring South Africa, which holds the key to workers rule throughout the entire region.

Proletarian revolution through smashing white supremacy and apartheid: this is the road to liberation in southern Africa, to ending for good the savage repression and exploitation which has kept the black masses in subjugation to colonialism and imperialism for so long. ■



SL placard says 'Victory to the Garners' Strike!', as striker addresses rally on Day of Action last January

After seventeen months on the picket lines, the struggle for union recognition at Garners' Steakhouses in London has ended, sold out by a TGWU bureaucracy which lifted not a finger to help win the strike but instead actively helped to strangle it. In the wake of this betrayal, a benefit concert to raise funds for the former strikers, supported by the Central London Musicians' Union and the ex-strike committee, has been organised for 7.30pm on 22 July, at the Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Road, London. Tickets, which cost £1, can be obtained from Garners Strike Fund, c/o Clare Armand, 14 Ladbroke Terrace, London W1.

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I-CL's right turn...

(Continued from page 2)

cessive LPYS conferences. But with nothing substantial to show for all their manoeuvres, with the organisation drifting and the ranks apparently restless, the leadership felt under pressure to do something to break out of the malaise. Taking one step further to the right, they tightened their links with the Chartists and other social democrats and came up with their 'solution': the SCLV.

Centrism in trouble

Throughout its history the Matgama tendency has tried all sorts of gimmicks in the search for centrist success. Lately, in the face of accumulated failure, they have deflected from their orbit around the USec and taken the al-

ready well-travelled right-wing path of accommodation to Labourism. But if behind them stands a shattered NII, then before them stands the craven reformism of the Chartists and Militant. Their sense of historical failure as left-of-USec centrists has already intersected the pressures of the social-democratic milieu to drive the organisation more and more rightward. Not only is *Socialist Organiser* an anti-Leninist abomination, but it's getting hard to tell the difference between it and *Workers Action*.

The SCLV venture, like all the others, will at best only temporarily soothe WA's centrist fears of being stranded on a 'sectarian' island. When a decisive test comes, either WA will cast aside its centrist garb and pass over to the camp of Militant-style reformism, or else this truly rotten alliance will disintegrate into its component parts -- leaving WA once more forlorn and lost, once again contemplating its navel and wondering what went wrong. And just as surely the leadership will be unable and unwilling to provide an explanation, for they are the ones who push every new gimmick as a sure road to success.

A revolutionary party cannot be built by such methods. By 'sectarianism', the I-CL means not refusal to intervene in real struggle, but an intransigent fight for the revolutionary programme in all arenas -- a fight which inevitably entails periods of isolation ('swimming against the stream') and guaranteed unpopularity in the pseudo-left milieu.

Basing one's programme on considerations of expediency and quick tactical success; refusing to call the sellouts of an Ernie Roberts by their proper name, but covering them up instead; jettisoning principles in order to win the favour of low-level bureaucrats and reformist 'personalities'; timidity and fear of temporary isolation -- these are the hallmarks of centrists, not revolutionists. Unlike the Matgama-ites, the Spartacist League rejects utterly the politics of duplicity and fawning sycophancy: a willingness to say what is and to uphold the programme of revolutionary Trotskyism is the starting point for the construction of a revolutionary party. With their methods, the I-CL is capable only of constructing flimsy barriers to the building of such a party. ■

editorial notes

Libertarian frenzy at Warwick University

By their deeds shall ye know them. On May 23 the much-vaunted 'anti-authoritarianism' of the Big Flame group was exposed for what it really is when Andrew Coates, a leading member of the Warwick University Big Flame clot, led a physical attack on two comrades of the Spartacist League during the course of a political argument at the university. The easily-rebuffed assault took place after a public meeting of the university-based Red Flame grouplet.

Incensed by the fact that some members of Red Flame, a small amorphous collection of leftists formed after a split from the local Socialist Workers Party branch, had expressed interest in political discussion with the SL, Coates had been systematically slandering us for some time before the attack occurred. After the Red Flame meeting, along with a drunken sidekick he tried

to provoke our comrades by screaming hysterically that the SL 'should have been shot' for criticising the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the IRA on a march to defend H-block prisoners in July last year.

When our comrades countered that revolutionaries not only have the right but also the duty to criticise the Provos, and then went on to suggest that Red Flame's infantile scheme to hurl cans of green paint at a proposed Orange Order demonstration in Coventry was not the smartest idea in the world, Coates went into paroxysms of rage. He threatened 'if you ever bring that filthy pro-imperialist line on this campus again, we will get you.' Then in the worst traditions of the nationalists Big Flame tails, Coates and his crony tried to do just that -- to 'get' us -- but predictably failed

dismally.

The following evening the SL successfully held a public meeting on Iran on the campus, attracting among others several members of Red Flame and other student leftists despite Coates' bully-boy tactics. When this goon attempted to enter the meeting with the undoubted intention of causing more disruption, he was swiftly shown the door by SL marshals.

We have consistently opposed the use of violence within the workers movement, but we will not permit attempts to deny our democratic rights to go unanswered. Nor do we intend abandoning our political struggle to win would-be revolutionaries to our programme -- and if that means impinging on Big Flame or anyone else's self-designated 'turf', then rest assured we will not be stopped. ■

Shoddy lies in Oxford

After years of generally ignoring the question, the little-Englanders of the Workers Socialist League (WSL) recently plucked up some courage and raised the question of British imperialism's oppression of Ireland within the labour movement. On May 19 they built a conference in their Oxford bailiwick, sponsored by the Oxford National Union of Journalists and the local Trades Council. But for all the WSL's chest-thumping about their supposed proletarian credentials, it is unlikely that their 'work' on the Irish struggle will get much beyond the confines of this Ruskin College talk-in. Most assuredly, WSL members in the TGWU are going to be in no rush to take up the struggle for trade union blacking of military supplies to Ireland, or other concrete measures aimed at forcing the immediate withdrawal of British troops.

As it was, the WSL-backed conference turned out to be nothing more than an occasion for sundry nationalists and displaced MPs to hold forth on their policies for Ireland. Brendan Gallagher, erstwhile nationalist parliamentary candidate against Roy Mason (whom the WSL supported against Gallagher) was there. So too was unemployed Labour faker Tom Litterick, along with dyed-in-the-wool opportunist Brian Trench, a leading member of Tony Cliff's fraternal state-capitalist grouping in Ireland, the Socialist Workers Tendency. (*Socialist Press* obligingly carried detailed reports of both Gallagher's and Trench's speeches.) The featured speakers invited to address the gathering did not even include one who could present the WSL's special blend of Labour-loyalism and green nationalism -- let alone put forward a principled revolutionary position.

Yet when the Trotskyist alternative to Repub-

licanism and cringing reformism was provided by members of the Spartacist League during floor discussion, all that WSL members in the audience could do was heckle. But when one SL comrade, formerly an Oxford WSL member, demanded why WSL leader Alan Thornett had completely ignored the Irish issue in his campaign for general secretary of the TGWU in 1977, there was no answer. Thornett was hardly likely to get up in a meeting which had just heckled Tom Litterick for his do-nothingism on Ireland and admit that he too rarely breathes a word about the question anywhere -- not even in his own unlamented reformist brainchild, the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

A week later, the WSL finally came up with a response to this exposure of their opportunism: slander. The report of the conference in *Socialist Press* did not, of course, attempt to reply to the issues the SL had raised, namely our call for immediate, unconditional troop withdrawal as opposed to Sinn Fein's treacherous calls for a 'Declaration of Intent', our opposition to forced capitalist reunification of Ireland and our programme for forging anti-imperialist class-struggle unity between Catholic and Protestant workers. It preferred instead the simple tactic of a flat lie. Thus we were told that the SL intervention was an attempt 'to defend their eccentric call for "self-determination" to the Loyalist oppressor in the North of Ireland' (*Socialist Press*, 23 May)!

This brazen falsehood is in no way the result of a misunderstanding. The WSL has had ample opportunity to study the Spartacist position on Ireland: after all, three-quarters of the former WSL Irish Commission left the organisation as part of the Trotskyist Faction, which went on to

help found the Spartacist League in early 1978.

Thornett & Co's lying reveals not only a WRP-style contempt for the truth and for honest political debate, but also a contempt for the revolutionary struggle to win Protestant workers away from Loyalism and Catholic workers away from their nationalist misleaders. The WSL has further taken to claiming that forced unification of the country under the southern Irish bourgeoisie of Jack Lynch would be 'progressive'. But even then they will be sure to peddle this vicarious petty-bourgeois nationalism only where it does not conflict with their day-to-day trade union economism. ■

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SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Iran: Defend endangered left-wing militants!

The lives of nine members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (Hezb-e Kargarane Socialist -- HKS) are in danger. They were arrested in Ahwaz, in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan, between May 30 and June 1, in the midst of bloody clashes between the Arab population of the region and the army of the Persian-chauvinist Khomeini regime. The Imam's Committee, the local arm of Islamic reaction which rounded them up, has refused to disclose the whereabouts of seven of the nine. Like the dozens of People's Fedayeen supporters arrested in the aftermath of the earlier Turkoman and Kurdish uprisings, the 'crime' of the HKS has been to offer support to the national minorities in their struggle against oppression within the Iranian 'prisonhouse of peoples'. The reactionary Islamic government must not be allowed to murder these militants -- save the endangered militants of the HKS and Fedayeen!

These latest repressive moves by the ayatollah's regime demand an immediate mobilisation of the left and workers movement internationally. The Iranian left is under the gun, as the Islamic theocracy moves to consolidate its rule against the rebellious national minorities, against women who do not want to return to the 'fire and sword' of seventh-century Islam, and against the working class.

The situation in Iran demands a broad united front defence centred on the social power of the proletariat. Yet the HKS, and the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) with which it is allied, are facing a potential bloodbath with a fatal aplomb born of social-democratic complacency, combined with a criminal sectarianism.

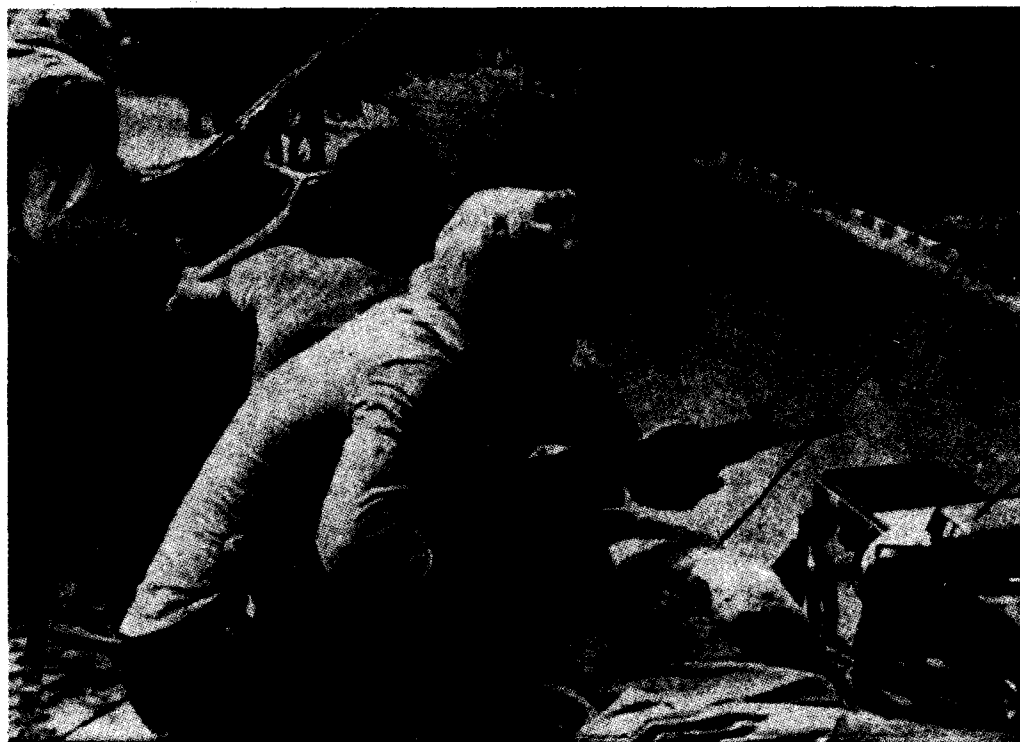
The USec has now launched a campaign on behalf of its imprisoned comrades, but *Socialist Challenge*, *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* and the US Socialist Workers Party's *Militant* had all passed over the arrests of the Fedayeen in silence! Finally, *ICP/Inprecor* nonchalantly reported in its June 18 issue that a Teheran picket line to 'Free the Nine' on June 9 had also carried placards defending several imprisoned workers and a 'People's Fedayeen activist

who was jailed by the government some time ago'. And that is all!

The USec's long and criminal silence reveals its anxiety to distance itself from the Fedayeen -- not because of the latter's capitulatory 'support at a distance' for the Bazargan government, nor certainly for its political adaptation to Khomeini, but out of pacifist legalism. After all, the Fedayeen were accused of *military aid* to the Turkomans while the HKS stands accused of putting out a *statement* in defence of Arab rights. *ICP/Inprecor* even has the gall to add that the HKS 'is the only party that has championed the rights of the oppressed nationalities'.

Even as the USec puts out its emergency call for international defence for the nine, the professional polyannas of *ICP/Inprecor* continue to marvel about the continuing 'dialogue' supposedly going on inside Iran about the way forward for the 'unfolding revolution'. The calm reportage of *ICP/Inprecor* is truly amazing -- balancing the news of the arrests with accounts of polite debates between HKS representatives and spokesmen for the ayatollah's Islamic reaction. Doubtless following Chairman Mao's advice to turn bad things into good things, *ICP/Inprecor* even manages to claim that the 300-strong Teheran picket line to protest against the arrests was a 'victory for democratic rights'!

Can the USec now say, as it said a few months ago, that Khomeini's opposition to the shah was 'progressive' or that the victory of



Khomeini's Islamic army moves against Arab rebels

the mullahs was a 'victory' for the oppressed masses of Iran? Apparently yes, as the HKS continues to map out its peaceful road to Iranian socialism, in which a constituent assembly will pass a 'Bill of Rights for the Workers and Toilers of Iran'. The USec has also stressed that the HKS was quick to denounce the killing of the reactionary Ayatollah Motahari as a 'counterrevolutionary act'. But no amount of parliamentary cretinism or scandalous grovelling will spare them from attack.

Serious militants, inside and outside Iran, must draw the lessons of the opportunist politics which at this very moment may be leading the comrades of the HKS and Fedayeen to the firing squads. Save the Fedayeen! Save the HKS militants! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction! ■

USec sabotages Iran defence

A united front defence to publicise internationally the plight of the HKS and Fedayeen militants in Iran is of the greatest urgency. But the sections of the United Secretariat have seriously undermined this defence by tying it to continued support for the same 'revolution' which now holds a gun to the heads of their comrades.

In Australia the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) actually tried to disband a demonstration rather than permit a contingent of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SLANZ) to march with slogans demanding the release of *all* the arrested leftists, an end to the veil and the smashing of the mullahs' rule through workers revolution. After the SWP pulled out, the SLANZ and independents remained to continue a spirited defence of the HKS and Fedayeen.

In another effort to press forward a non-sectarian defence campaign, the Spartacist

Club of La Trobe University in Melbourne succeeded in getting a motion passed at a students general meeting which called on the Australian Union of Students to initiate a national campaign of demonstrations to demand 'Free the Endangered Militants of the Fedayeen and the HKS'. A separate motion, which also carried, noted the vicious, reactionary character of the mullahs' assault on the democratic rights of women and called for 'workers revolution to overthrow the theocratic Islamic republic of Ayatollah Khomeini'. Disgracefully, an SWP supporter attempted to prevent any vote by claiming there was no quorum. When this sabotage of his own comrades' defence failed he refused to vote for either motion.

In France, a contingent from the Ligue Trotskyste de France, sympathising section of the international Spartacist tendency, was able to participate in a small (300 strong) USec defence demonstration on June 14 without

incident. However in the US when the Bay Area Spartacist League proposed to the local SWP a united front demonstration demanding freedom for the arrested HKS militants, we were told by the San Francisco organiser: 'Not interested'. Nonetheless, the SL initiated a defence demonstration which was held on June 22.

The casual indifference of these USec cynics, safe and snug in their respective homelands, in scuttling protests called to defend their own comrades should be nauseating to anyone with even a shred of revolutionary fibre. Perhaps if it was *their* lives which hung in the balance, if it was they who faced possible death by firing squad or stoning, then they might feel different. Despite this criminal sabotage, and despite our many and profound differences with the HKS, the Spartacist tendency will continue to press for a non-sectarian united front defence to secure the release of these imprisoned militants.